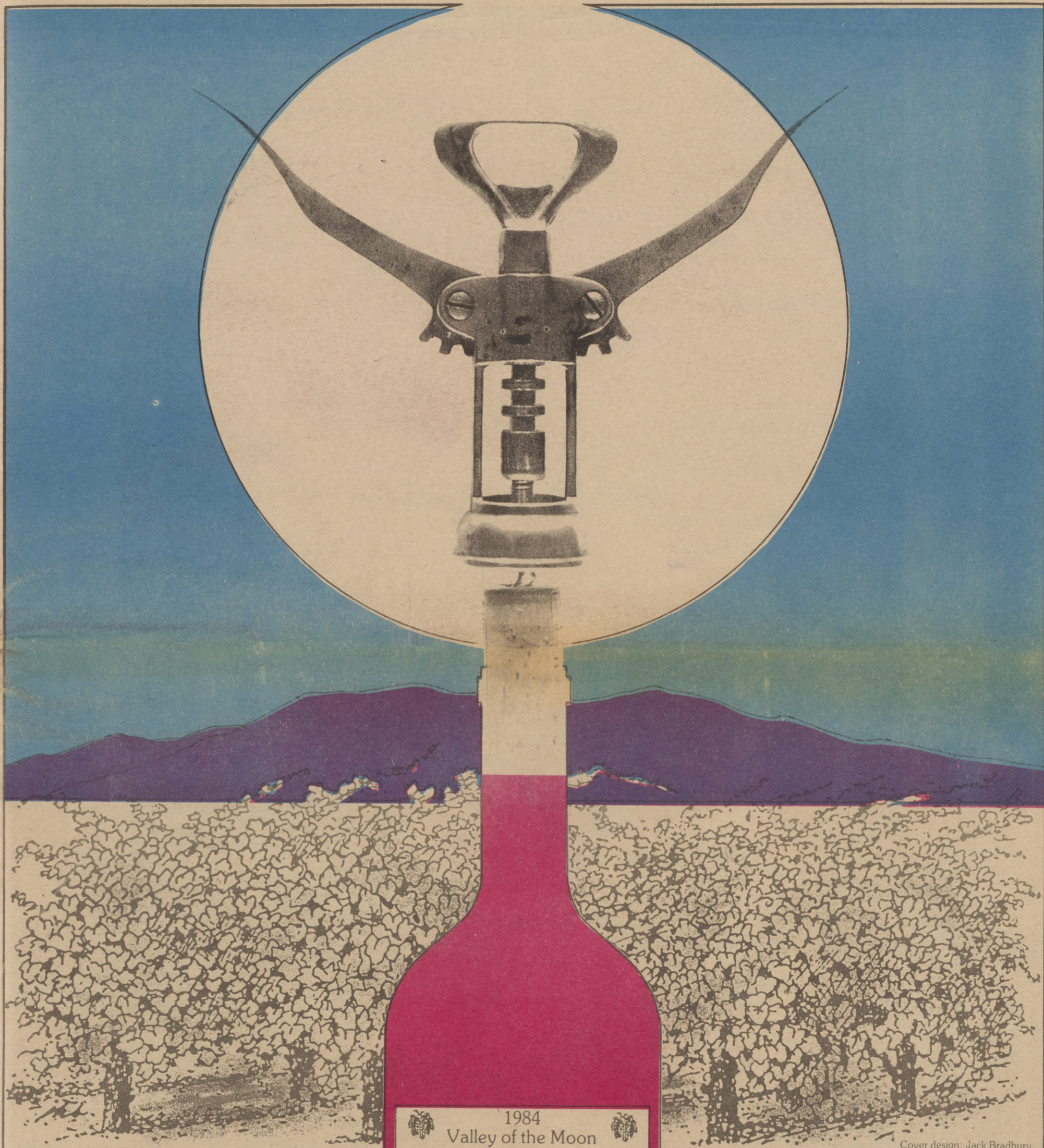


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Cover design: Jack Bradbury

Inside this magazine:

- Doobies manager to roll with winery
- Film writer starts valley vineyard

1984
Valley of the Moon
Vintage Festival
OFFICIAL PROGRAM



Supplement to
The Sonoma Index-Observer

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Those subscribers who receive this week's Index-Tribune in the mail will notice that the special Vintage Festival Supplement/Official Program is composed of two separate sections which are not inserted in numerical order. To make the program whole and have the pages follow in proper sequence, merely insert the section beginning on page 17 into the center of the cover section, between pages 16 and 57.

38th Annual Valley of the Moon Vintage Festival

Official PROGRAM 1984

Friday, September 28



6:30-9:30 p.m.	Patrons' Wine Tasting Wines Featured:	The Barracks	Hacienda	1981 Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma Valley) 1983 Sauvignon Blanc (Sonoma Valley) 1982 Chardonnay (Sonoma Valley)
Adler Fels	1983 Gewurztraminer 1980 Cabernet Sauvignon		Hanzell	1980 Pinot Noir
Buena Vista	1982 Fume' Blanc (Sonoma County/Alexander Valley) 1981 Special Selection Pinot Noir (Sonoma Valley Carneros)		Haywood	1981 Cabernet Sauvignon (Estate Bottled, SV) 1983 Chardonnay (Estate Bottled, SV) 1983 White Riesling (Estate Bottled, SV)
Carmenet	1983 Sauvignon Blanc		Kenwood	1983 Sauvignon Blanc 1983 Chenin Blanc 1981 Cabernet Sauvignon
Chateau St. Jean	1983 Vin Blanc (Sonoma County) 1983 Johannisberg Riesling (Sonoma County)		Ravenswood	1982 Sonoma Zinfandel 1982 Sonoma Cabernet
Coturri & Sons	1981 Cabernet (Sonoma Valley) 1982 Chardonnay (Sonoma Valley) 1982 Pinot Noir		Sebastiani	1982 Proprietor's Reserve Chardonnay 1978 Proprietor's Reserve Zinfandel
Glen Ellen	1982 Cabernet Proprietor's Reserve 1983 Chardonnay Proprietor's Reserve 1983 Glen Ellen Sauvignon Blanc		St. Francis	1983 Gewurztraminer 1981 Merlot
Grand Cru	1981 Zinfandel (Sonoma Valley Appellation) 1983 Gewurztraminer (Sonoma Valley Appellation) 1983 Sauvignon Blanc (New Release)		General M.G. Vallejo	Sonoma Red Sonoma White
Gundlach-Bundschu	1980 Zinfandel (Barricia Vineyards) 1983 Gewurztraminer (Rhinefarm Vineyards) 1982 Sonoma Riesling (Sonoma Valley)		Valley of the Moon	1983 White Zinfandel (Estate Bottled) 1982 French Colombard (Estate Bottled) 1980 Pinot Noir (Sangiacomo Vineyard)

Saturday, September 29

10:00 a.m.	Festival Opens		2:30 p.m.	Majida Magdalena Sequence River Choir Daleela Whiskey Before Breakfast	NW Plaza SW Plaza NE Plaza SE Plaza Amphitheatre
10:45 a.m.	Hospital Auxiliary Fashion Show Amphitheatre		3:00 p.m.	Sonoma Grape Stompers	No. of City Hall
11:00 a.m.	Blessing of Grapes	Mission	3:30 p.m.	Tombstone Express	
11:30 a.m.	Bear Flag Revolt	NE Plaza	4:00 p.m.	Peter Greenwood Beats Workin' Daleela Le Soleil Slippery Jim Fyffe	Mission Chapel Amphitheatre SE Plaza NW Plaza SW Plaza
12:00 noon	Grape Stomp	Amphitheatre	9:00 p.m.-1 a.m.	Spanish Ball with the Steve Balich Orchestra	Vets' Mem. Bldg.
12:15 p.m.	Daleela	SE Plaza			
12:30 p.m.	River Choir Le Soleil	NE Plaza NW Plaza			
1:00 p.m.	Wedding	Mission			
1:30 p.m.	Tombstone Express Valley Folk Dancers	No. City Hall NW Plaza			
2:00 p.m.	Children's Parade				
				Strolling: Stop-Look-Listen (SPEBSQSA, Inc.) Barbershop Quartet	

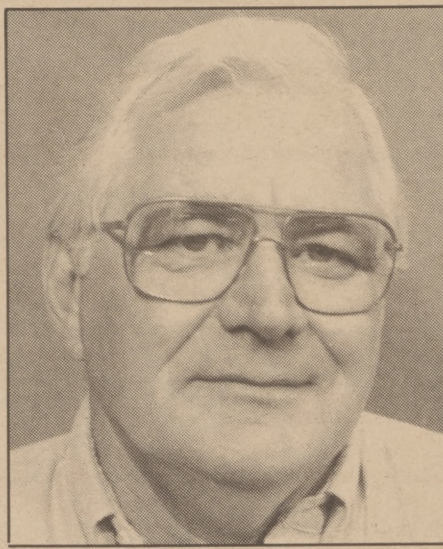
Sunday, September 30

8:00 a.m.	Vintage Run	Sebastiani Vineyards Parking Lot	1:30 p.m.	Tombstone Express Sonoma Valley Dancers	No. of City Hall NW Plaza
10:00 a.m.	Seven Flags of Sonoma (written by Ruth Akin)	Trinity Episcopal Church 275 E. Spain St.	2:00 p.m.	Parade	Around Plaza
12:00 noon	Grape Stomp	Amphitheatre	3:00 p.m.	Greco Accordion Ensemble	NE Plaza
12:15 p.m.	Daleela Showcase	SE Plaza SW Plaza	3:30 p.m.	Tombstone Express	No. of City Hall
12:30 p.m.	Tombstone Express	No. of City Hall	4:00 p.m.	Fireman's Water Fight Le Soleil Nautilus Navy Band East Bay Banjo Band Schellville Southside Blues Band	No. Side of Plaza NW Plaza SW Plaza SE Plaza Amphitheatre
1:00 p.m.	Wedding Rudy Downey & the Kansas City Special	Mission Amphitheatre			
1:15 p.m.	Dr. Now	SW Plaza		Strolling: Uncalled Upons Barbershop Quartet	

Vintage Festival Officers for 1984



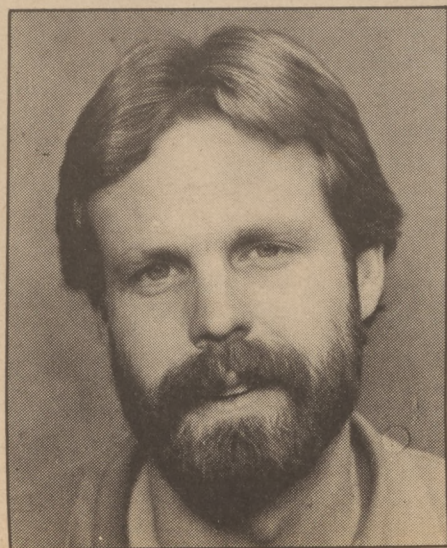
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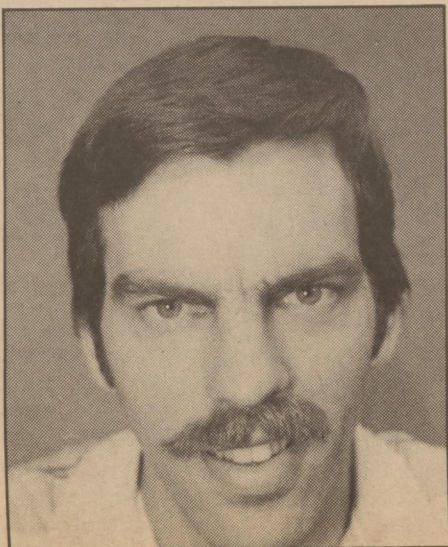
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1984 Vintage Festival

The events, the people

Children's parade

The fourth annual Children's Parade will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday. Starting at Hughes Field the parade will proceed down First Street East, West on Spain Street and up First Street West. Prizes will be awarded in a variety of categories.

Parade volunteers this year are: Tom Stahlbaum, Jim Lopes, Jeni Stahlbaum, Mike (Chip) LaPorte, Shari Stahlbaum, Robert Evans, Charles T. Walter, Oneida Alberta, Al Alberta, Amy LaPorte, Darrell Ross

(announcer for the fourth year in a row) and the Sonoma Horsemen's Association.

Judges for the parade: Mr. and Mrs. Michael LaPorte, President, Electrical Specialty Company, South San Francisco, Ca.; Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Koffler, President & General Manager, Benkiser Electric, San Leandro; and Mr. and Mrs. Paul Ortega, President, East Bay Electric Motors, Oakland.

President's welcome

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 1984 Valley of The Moon Vintage Festival.

The Board of Directors is a remarkable group of selfless, dedicated, innovative and creative individuals who have worked all year to bring you the 38th consecutive annual Vintage Festival. We are proud to present to you the result of their efforts.

To raise the necessary funds for the Festival, we count on our generous patrons, many of whom are listed in this publication (due to an early press deadline, the names of many patrons do not appear), the vintners who participate in the patrons wine tasting donating their time and wines to our success, and the merchants who support our cause with donations and discounts.

Also generous in their support are the people who attend our fund-raisers, purchase our t-shirts and posters and patronize the booths of the non-profit organizations who derive some of their support from this source. To all of these splendid folks - our deepest gratitude.

The harvest, being very early this year, is for the most part complete. The Valley of the Moon Vintage Festival is here, so we invite you to share our harvest of entertainment, fun, good living and our lovely town with us. We hope you will enjoy the fruits of our labors as well as the fruit of our vines.

Thank you for joining us.

Sincerely yours,
Tom B. Michelis
President

Board of Directors

Miriam Ansell; Pete Atkin; Charles Cook; Beth Cramer; Gary Cramer; Janice Fraser; Frank Garner; Pat Goin; David Herlong; Charlotte Herlong; Wells Horton; June King; John Meserve; Edna Michelis; Tom Michelis; Claudia Morris; Eric Morrison; Evelyn Osburn; Cleo Pulsifer; Norma Pulsifer; Barbara Stahlbaum.

Alternates

Peter Goodman; Gail Lopes; Dennis O'Neil; Anna Sue Schlobohm; Sharon Singleton; Nancyless Woodward.

Chairing the events

Bear Flag Revolt, Charles Cook; Belt Raffle, Gail Lopes; Blessing of the Grapes, Dennis O'Neil; Booths, John Meserve; Children's Parade, Barbara Stahlbaum; Costumes, Claudia Morris; Entertainment, Beth Cramer and Wells Horton; Firemen's Water Fight, Dennis O'Neil; Grape Stomp, Frank Garner; Hospitality, Pat Goin; Patrons, Pete Atkin; Poster, Gail Lopes; Publicity, Norma Pulsifer; Security, Gary Cramer; Signs, Wells Horton; Sunday Parade, David Herlong; T-Shirts, June King; Vacation of a Lifetime, Pete Atkin; Vintage Ball, Cleo Pulsifer; V.F. Booth, Evie Osburn; Wedding, Nancyless Woodward; Window Display, Charlotte Herlong; Wine Tasting, Beth and Gary Cramer.

The Big Parade

One of the Vintage Festival highlights is the Vintage parade, which will take place around three sides of the Plaza on Sunday, beginning at 2 p.m. Just find a spot anywhere on the east, west and south side of the Plaza

and you'll have a front row seat along the line of march. Prizes will be awarded in a variety of categories.

Sylvia Sebastiani is this year's Grand Marshal.

Festival booths

Each year during the Vintage Festival, non-profit organizations and clubs sponsor booths with food, games and entertainment in the plaza area.

This year's groups include: The Soptimists of Sonoma, Information Booth; Valley of the Moon Boys and Girls Club, ice cream; Sonoma Valley Lioness, pie and cake; Sonoma Valley Rodeo Association, Budweiser beer and hats; Women of the Moose, children's games; Sonoma Valley High School Booster Club, hot dogs, French fries, and iced tea; Lions Club of Sonoma, Pepsi Cola and orange soda; St. Francis parents Club, children's games; Society for the Preservation and encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet singing in America, corn on

the cob; National Council on Alcoholism, crepes, juices and mineral water; Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department, chicken sandwiches and bean salad; Boy Scouts of America Troop No. 10, salami throw; Shining Examples, stained glass; Valley of the Moon Lions Club, games; Sons of Italy Lodge No. 1959, spaghetti and French bread; Sonoma Community Center, sausage sandwiches; Catholic Community Services Auxiliary, wine glasses, cheese and bread; Sonoma Valley Quilters, hand made quilts; Sonoma Valley Ballet Association, cinnamon buns; Sonoma Valley Art Center, arts and crafts; and Vintage Festival Association, T-shirts and posters.

Gardens and gems

All day Saturday and Sunday during the Vintage Festival, the Sonoma Community Center will again be the site of a garden show and gems and mineral exhibit. Hosting the traditional garden show is the Valley of the Moon Garden Club; the Valley of the

Moon Gem and Mineral Club will also have its annual display. Both shows are free. Homemade sandwiches, cakes and refreshments will be available. The Community Center is located at 276 E. Napa St., Sonoma, two blocks east of the plaza.

The Vintage Ball

Saturday, Sept. 29, at the Sonoma Valley Veterans' Memorial Building, from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Featuring the Steve Balich Orchestra playing the sounds of the 30's, 40's and 50's.

There will be a no-host bar. Prizes

for the best costumes, although costumes are not required. A buffet will be served.

Tickets are \$7.50 per person and are available at the door.

Special guests invited

Invited to be honored guests at the Vintage Festival Blessing of the Grapes on Saturday are President Ronald Reagan, U.S. Senators Alan Cranston and Pete Wilson, Governor George Deukmejian, Congressman Doug Bosco, Congresswoman Barbara Boxer, State Senator Jim Nielsen, Assemblyman Don Sebastiani, Sonoma County First District Supervisor Bob Adams, Mayor of Sonoma

Henry Riboni, Jr., Vice Mayor of Sonoma Jeanne Markson, Council members Ken McTaggart, Dan Ruggles and Gerald Tuller, and Sonoma's ten Honorary Alcades - Henri Maysonave, August Pinelli, Jerry Casson, Robert M. Lynch, Dan Ruggles, Dr. Paul and Mrs. Adele Harrison, Gail Fehrens, Chet Sharek and the current Alcalde, Evelyn Berger.

Festival volunteers

In addition to the hard work of the Board of Directors, the Vintage Festival could not be the success that it is without the aid and assistance of the numerous volunteers who donate time, energy and money to the fund raisers and the festival itself.

As we go to press, we are listing some of those people and organizations who have lent a hand, a facility, or done one, or more, of those hundreds of separate efforts which make the whole.

We know we have missed many people and to them we offer our apologies along with our thanks:

Broadway Cleaners, Oneita Alberda, Mission Sonoma Realtors, Lil and Del Smith, Marion Peart, the Staff of the Sonoma Valley Chamber

of Commerce, The Soroptimists, The Triple Tree, James and Ann McGlade, Bear Flag Realty, The Venture Club of Sonoma, Explorer Scouts, George Buckingham and BSA Troop 10, Chief Rettle and the Sonoma Police Department, Sonoma City Park Department, John Keester, Dave Chavoya, Veterans' Memorial, Santa Rosa Junior College Art Department, Rick MacKinzie, Jim Wilson, John Wilson, Ethan Sides, James Franches, Amy Sides.

Special thanks to the Sonoma Valley Wineries, the Sonoma French Bakery, the Sonoma Sausage Company, Vella's Cheese, Sonoma Cheese Factory, Buena Vista Winery, Cherry Tree, State Parks Department, Norma Camporelli, Pat Watkins, Kathleen Hill.

Past presidents

*1947 James F. Lyttle; 1948 Daniel Ruggles; 1949 August Pinelli; *1950 Armand Franquelin; *1951 Mrs. Orson Linn; *1952 Howard Blank; *1953 Charles Cochran; *1954 Carolyn Wolfe; *1955 Harry Phinney; *1956 E.L. Richardson; *1957 Esther Pagani Gowans; *1958 Esther Pagani Gowans; *1959 Col. J.V. Thebaud; *1960 Edgar Waite; *1961 Louis Vela; 1962 Hudson Auberlin; 1963 R.H. "Bob" Brown; 1964 Ray Sampson; 1965 George Powell; 1966 Robert Cannard; 1967 Henri Maysonnave; 1968 Dr. Allan Querin; 1969 Jack Adams; 1970 Col. Paul Walker; 1971 Col. Paul Walker; 1972 Merlyn Hunter; 1973 Dr. Ralph Kelly; 1974 Sue Stanley; 1975 Toni Schafner; 1976 Elaine Sheffer; 1977 Dorene Musilli; 1978 Dorene Musilli; 1979 Frank Cummings; 1980 Evan Ross; 1981 Evan Ross; 1982 Evan Ross; 1983 Tom B. Michelis.

*Deceased

Festival patrons

Mr. and Mrs. Warren Breidenbach; Janice Fraser; Mr. and Mrs. Al Gordon; Mr. and Mrs. James Lopes; Mr. and Mrs. Franklyn Lyons; Edna Michelis; Evelyn Osburn; Cleo and Normal Paulsifer; Capt. and Mrs. Sam Robinson; Mr. and Mrs. John David Rothschild; Sharon and William Singleton; Jordan Smith; and Mr. and Mrs. David Viviani.

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On the horizon

- Rock music manager's Olive Hill winery p. 7
- Film writer's Jessandra vineyards p. 15
- Smothers' future in Kenwood p. 63
- Reviving Vallejo winery, vineyards p. 64

Olive Hill

Doobie Brothers manager Bruce Cohn plans to put his business smarts to work in a new winery planned for his Glen Ellen ranch

By JOHN LYNCH
I-T Managing Editor

Bruce Cohn is convinced that music and wine go well together. If that's the case then 1985 looks to be a vintage year for both.

He managed the Doobie Brothers, one of the most successful American rock and roll bands during the seventies, from their inception in 1969 to their break up two years ago. Now, the Doobies, including two of the original members of the band, Tom Johnston and Patrick Simmons, are reuniting for an album and tour next year.

Cohn owns Sonoma Valley's idyllic,

picturesque Olive Hill Vineyards ranch, where he has lived and produced wine grapes for other wineries over the past decade. One of the local wineries that has reaped the rewards of his grapes is Gundlach-Bundschu, whose 1980 Olive Hill Cabernet Sauvignon had the distinction of being brought by President Reagan and staff to China and served during the President's visit there earlier this year.

Next year, Cohn hopes to keep those same estate grown grapes and build his own winery—an elegant, French

TURN TO PAGE 8



Photo by John Lynch

WHO ARE THESE GUYS?—Bruce Cohn (l) with his latest discovery, Michael Furlong; Furlong's first album is due out Sept. 27.

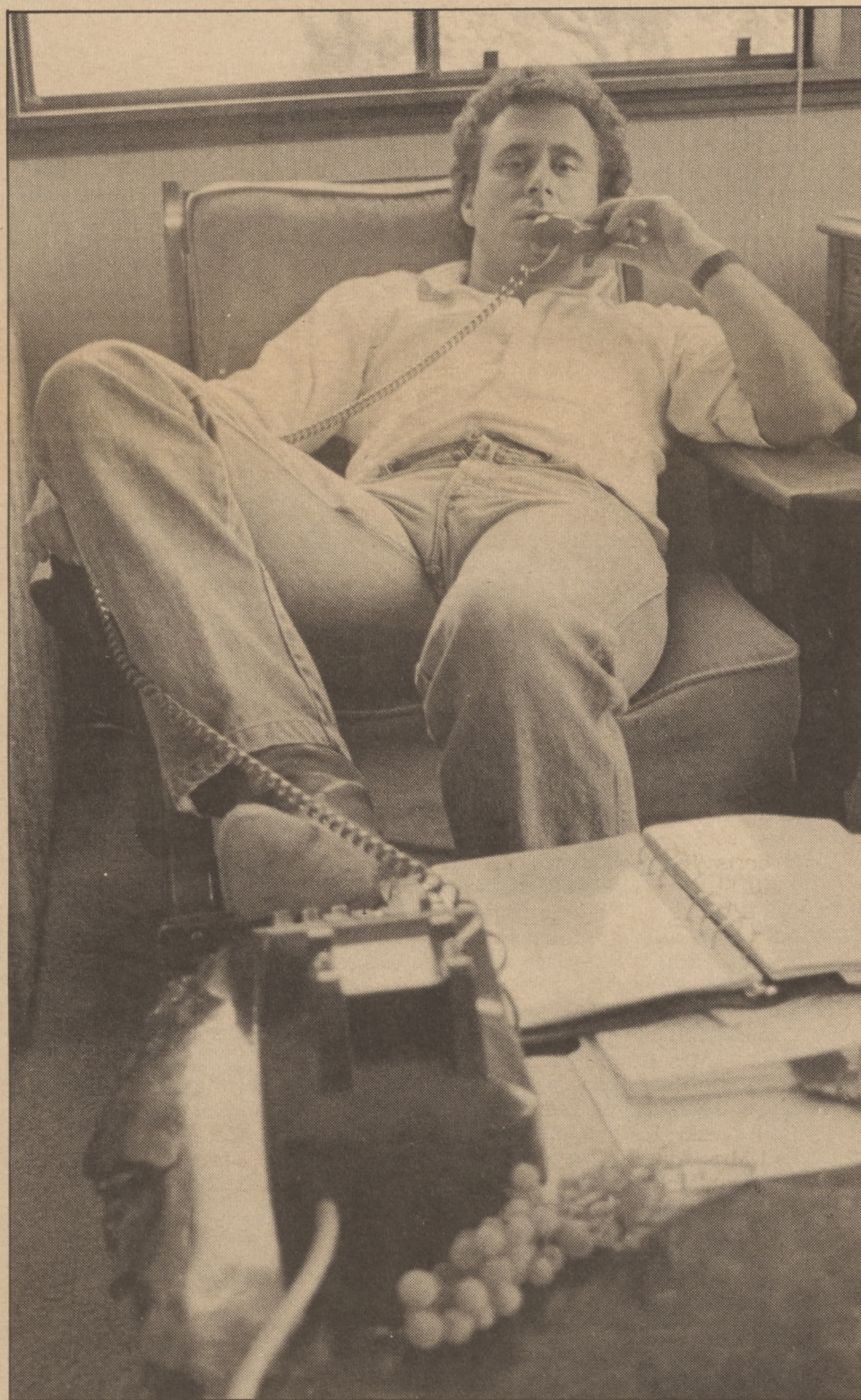


Photo by John Lynch

ROCK MANAGER AND OLIVE HILL VINTNER BRUCE COHN
The telephone is a constant companion

Olive Hill

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

chateau style stone structure to be erected amid a grove of olive trees—at the historic ranch, located off Sonoma Highway just north of Madrone Road near Glen Ellen. It's an ambitious project, one that will cost him over \$2 million.

In addition to the Doobies, who grossed over \$144 million on tour and sold over 33 million albums, Cohn manages another highly successful rock band, Night Ranger, featuring lead singer and Santa Rosa resident Jack Blades. Night Ranger just recently came off a successful eight-month world tour. He also manages another band, Taxi.

Michael Furlong is the name of the newest band he manages, a "heavy, very heavy metal" act that is bound to be a hit, he boasts. ("Michael's vocals, he declares, 'have been described as a cross between Rod Stewart and Huey Lewis.'")

Furlong's debut album, "Use It Or Lose It," (Atlantic Records) is due to be released on Sept. 27. The single "Use It Or Lose It" is already out and has been well-received, notes Michael Coates, a spokesman for Bruce Cohn Management, the offices of which are based on West Napa Street in Sonoma.

All 12 Doobie Brothers albums sold well, all but two going platinum (100,000 units or more). Among the most successful LPs were "Minute by Minute," "The Captain and Me" and the first "Best of the Doobies" release, each of which sold over four million copies. "Toulouse Street,"

which catapulted the Doobies into rock and roll prominence with the hit song, "Listen to the Music," sold another three million copies.

When Tom Jonhston left the band due to illness in 1976, the Doobies departed from their highly successful rock and roll, or "country rock" format, as their manager described it. Michael McDonald joined the band, injecting a softer, "easy listening" tone to the Doobies' music. Recalls Cohn, "It took a couple of albums to convince people that the new Doobies' sound was good."

Convince them they did. McDonald wrote "Takin' it to the Streets" and the Doobies went on to sell several million more albums.

Not bad for a band that once called itself The Puds and played before wild Hells Angels in Santa Cruz during the late sixties.

One of Cohn's associates emphasizes, "If it wasn't for the success of the Doobie Brothers there would be no ranch and if wasn't for Night Ranger, there would be no winery."

COHN, 37, couldn't agree more. "These hard-working musicians are fueling the winery at this point—indirectly—not to mention Production Credit Association," he laughs.

Many so-called financial experts might find themselves laughing knowing that someone is about to dump over a couple of million dollars into a winery at a time when the wine market is notoriously "flat" and interest rates less than favorable. But the highly confident Cohn quickly dismisses that argument.

"When people say it's the wrong time, that's when I say 'let's do it.' My gut feeling tells me now's the time," he says.

SPRAWLED comfortably in a chair inside a room at his Olive Hill home where the walls are covered with framed gold records produced by the Doobie Brothers and Night Ranger, Cohn seems to spend most of his life on the telephone, talking with execs in the music industry in various cities around the country.

An anxious Michael Furlong sits pensively nearby, listening. Cohn spends the day alternately pulling Furlong aside to discuss business,

conversing at length on the telephone and talking with great zeal about his future plans in the wine business here in Sonoma Valley. Life in the fast lane, as it were.

Cohn, who grew up on a goat dairy farm in Forestville and aspired to become a veterinarian (Olive Hill, interestingly enough, used to be a dairy and hay ranch decades ago), acquired the now 65 acre Olive Hill Ranch in 1974 from the late Don Tarvid, Sr. A prominent Sonoma Valley resident who was a top executive with Sears Roebuck, Tarvid had owned the property since 1940. At the time Cohn bought the ranch, there were about 18 acres of grapes.



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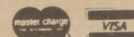
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Today, there are 52 acres of vines, mostly Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay, and some Pinot Noir. Cohn hopes to add Sauvignon Blanc in the future, thus giving Olive Hill two white and two red wines to produce and market. Ultimately, he'd like to have 100 acres of grapes growing there.

He leases 10 acres from Otto Teller, owner of the nearby Oak Hill Farm. He recently acquired an adjacent nine acre piece of property, which will be the site of the winery. Negotiations are underway for the purchase of an additional 34 acres of land.

HOPING TO break ground in the spring, Cohn says the winery, to be called simply Olive Hill, will be similar in design to Napa Valley's Chateau Chevalier, a magnificent stone castle erected by George Chevalier and modeled after a French chateau located near Amboise. Sixteen olive trees, transplanted from the main ranch site, will surround the winery.

Equipment will include a tank press, jacketed stainless steel fermentation tanks, small French oak cooperage. The three-story, 12,000 structure will implement the French-style "gravity flow process" of wine making, which eliminates the need for electricity to "must pump" the crushed grapes into holding tanks. Grapes used will be exclusively those grown at Olive Hill. He hopes to be crushing grapes in his new winery next fall.

Cohn has hired a veteran wine maker, Helen Turley, an East Coast native who for seven years worked at Robert Mondavi Winery, followed by stints at other Napa Valley wineries, including Pope Valley, Chappellet and Stonegate. A graduate in enology from Cornell University, she has been busy making Olive Hill wines this fall, using the facilities at Gundlach-Bundschu Winery. Olive Hill kept half its crop, the other half being sold to Sebastiani Vineyards. Production this year is set at about 5 to 6,000 cases with plans to perhaps double that in 1985.

A barn at Olive Hill serves as a makeshift wine lab, under the watchful eye of Hubie, a lovable old steer with a voracious appetite for grapes and just about everything else.

Turley says she will stress making "food wine," wine that is compatible with foods.

The Olive Hill vineyard manager continues to be Whit Ledson, a friendly chap whose family used to own the property that is now Annadel State Park north of Kenwood. The grapes he tends to at Olive Hill are "the best in the valley," according to Cohn. The area is a veritable "banana belt," warmer than any other in Sonoma Valley.

STRESSING that he wants to have a "social winery," Cohn would like to have a tasting room, even an outdoor amphitheatre at the winery where concerts could be held during the

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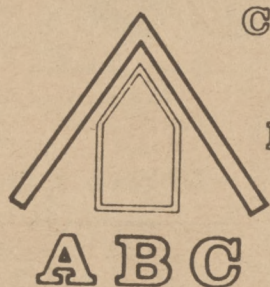
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Olive Hill

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

summer. Music, it seems, will always be a part of his life in one form or another.

In addition to his agricultural background (along with his family's dairy operation, he was active in Future Farmers of America as a youth and owned up until recently a herd of registered Herefords), Cohn says that the music business has taught him a lot about marketing different packages. "I'm finding out that there are a lot of parallels in marketing wine and record albums," he explains. "With wines, you're dealing with varying products and varying tastes. With music it's the same thing; the buyers

have changing tastes." Also, he's finding out that he can market a lot of the wine himself while he's on the road.

If his business savvy has helped produce successful careers for the likes of the Doobie Brothers and Night Ranger, then perhaps his knowledge and interest in agriculture and veterinary medicine has helped him corral and otherwise deal with the "animal" tendencies of the rock music industry, an aggressive business that has strewn a wake of human wreckage from Britain to Hollywood.

"It (music business) moves fast, changes fast," he says. "Anytime you can make money fast, you'll find people who aren't the most sincere human beings in the world, know

what I mean? I just try to skirt trouble."

But, as he says, it is those less-than-sincere people that one most deal with—"if you want to make it."

HE AND the Doobies made it, made it big. But the stress, the strain, the "insincerity" eventually took its toll.

In 1982 it was announced that the Doobie Brothers—after 12 albums, 12 years of touring and over 12 personnel changes—were disbanding. Cohn put it simply: "They were tired."

At about the same time, he was going through a divorce from his wife. The bottom suddenly seemed to have dropped out. "After the Doobies broke

'Anytime you can make money fast, you'll find people who aren't the most sincere human beings in the world'

TURN TO PAGE 12



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Photo by John Lynch

HOME OF FUTURE SONOMA VALLEY WINERY
Glen Ellen's beautiful Olive Hill Vineyards

Olive Hill

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

up," he recalls, "I really didn't know what I was going to do; I didn't know if I'd be able to keep the ranch."

But Night Ranger rode into the picture, thanks to an old friend who had brought him a tape to listen to. He liked what he heard and arranged to meet the group. "They were down to earth guys, very energetic," Cohn recalls. "At this point in my life I don't

want to deal with someone unless they're interested and want to work."

Night Ranger's hard work paid off. The band's first album sold over 800,000 copies, the second over two million copies. A third album on MCA Records is due out in February. Cohn, whose background is in television production (he worked for channel 20 in San Francisco before being approached by Johnston to manage the

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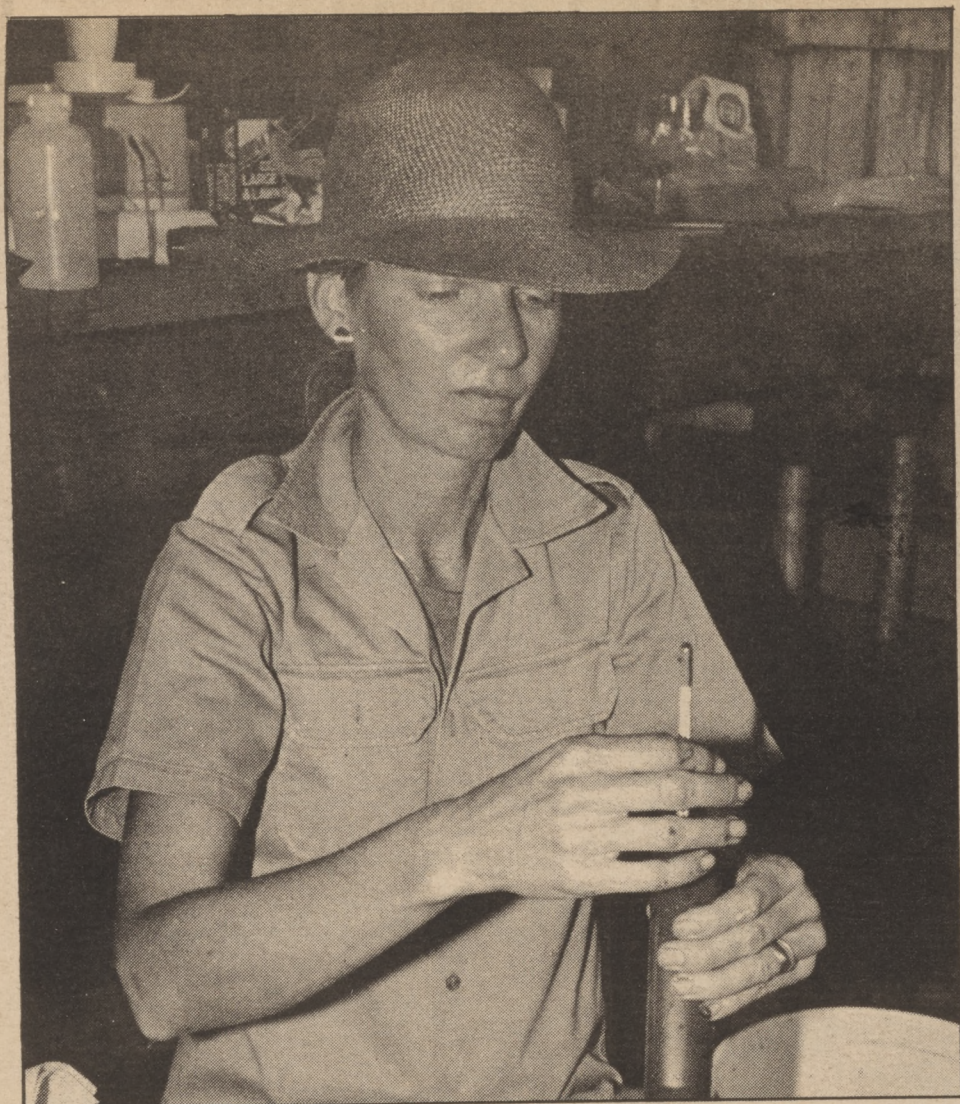


Photo by John Lynch

SHE'LL BE THE OLIVE HILL WINEMAKER
Helen Turley learned much of her craft in Napa Valley



Photo by John Lynch

VINEYARD MANAGER WHIT LEDSON
He carefully tends to the Olive Hill vines

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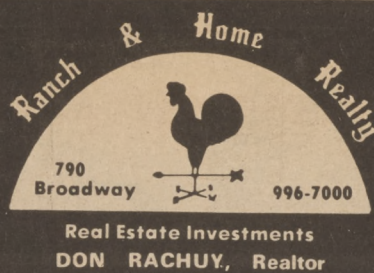
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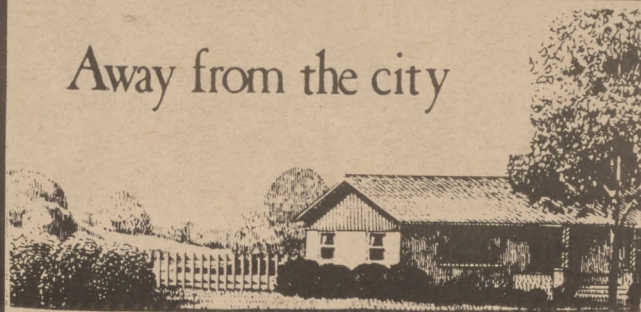
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Olive Hill

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Doobies), has also written the concepts for two Night Ranger videos.

And with the Doobies getting back together, featuring veterans Simmons and Johnston, there's even more reason for optimism. "It's going to be the old style Doobies rock and roll. It'll be fun," Cohn says, flashing a smile.

And, of course, there's the fun, and challenge, of a new wine gig in the works. "I'm relaxed; I don't feel pressured at all," Cohn asserts. "All those days with the Doobies, it gave me a depth of constitution to handle the problems."

He relaxes by spending time with his two sons—Dan, 9, and Joe, 7 (Dan is already interested in wine making, according to Dad, and Joe is looking more and more like the ideal "P.R. man, a good schmoozer," he laughs). Father and sons enjoy their condo retreat in Tahoe, skiing and generally having a good time.

Whether it's rock and roll, wine or just plain taking it easy, the secret, he emphasizes, is persistence. "You have to be persistent and work hard at it. And if you're lucky, it will happen."

If his success in the music business is any indication, then Olive Hill wines ought to be a hit.

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Jessandra

The man who wrote the films 'Taps' and 'The Karate Kid' plants vineyards and plans home in the hills of Sonoma Valley

By JOHN LYNCH
I-T Managing Editor

Weary of the long Colorado winters and living in the rugged Rockies 9,000 feet above sea level, prominent film writer Robert Mark Kamen finally decided that he wanted to seek out a more leisurely, temperate climate—"find a place," as he put it in a recent phone interview, "to grow tomatoes."

He and his wife, Joya, headed west and quite by chance, wound up finding a spectacular, nearly as rugged 300 acre spread in the hills high atop Mission Highlands overlooking Sonoma Valley.

And it's wine grapes, not tomatoes, that he's growing in those rich volca-

their new home.

Kamen, 36, someday plans to construct a winery on the property. When asked if he possessed any background in wine, he responded, "Just a lifelong interest in drinking it."

"I've always dreamed of someday having a ranch," says Kamen, who grew up in the confines of a New York City housing project. "I cut my teeth on concrete."

GIVEN THAT, Kamen, who wrote the highly successful films "Taps" and more recently, "The Karate Kid," should feel right at home on his new, mountainous Sonoma Valley ranch, named "Jessandra," after his



Photo by Paul Gallaher Photography, Crested Butte, Co.

FILM WRITER ROBERT KAMEN

'The Karate Kid' has been a successful project for this local vineyard owner and future Sonoma Valley resident

nic soils in the hills above town, where one can see Mt. Tamalpais and the greater Bay Area to the south, and the neighboring vineyards of Carmenet, Martini and Rancho Alta Vista to the west and east.

Next spring, work is expected to begin on a lavish 9,000 square foot home for the Kamens and their two young daughters, Alessandra, age two, and Jessica, one. A barn has already been built on the site and work on Kamen's writing studio is nearly finished there. His wife, a designer from Italy, did the design work on the studio and barn and is also designing

two daughters. There, local mountain goat vineyardist Phil Coturri and his hard-working crewmen spent months bulldozing, hammering and riveting through concrete-like volcanic rock, dodging rattlesnake nests with the quickness of a wide receiver avoiding a meat-hungry defensive back, and braving the other painful rigors of boring out a place to grow grapevines in steep, hard-rock, volcanic desert terrain.

Kamen could probably write a movie about it.

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TURN TO PAGE 60



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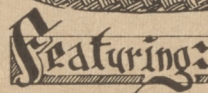
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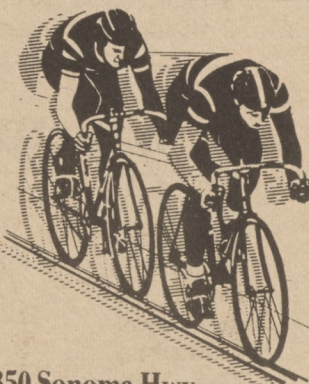


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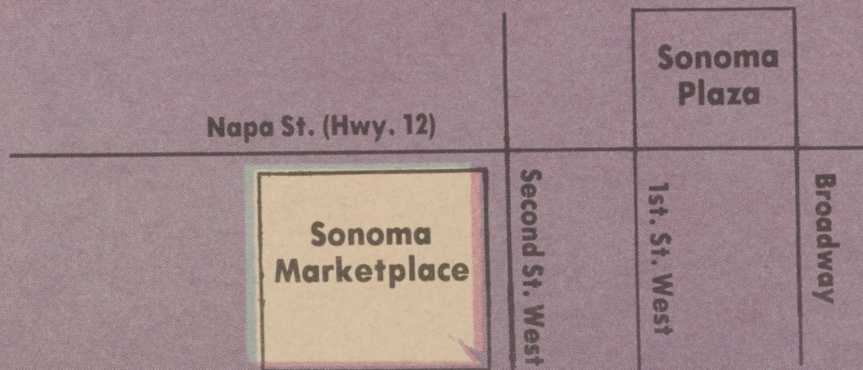
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Wine on the 'farm'

More than just art and emus at the Art Farm

By RHONDA PARKS
I-T Staff Writer

At the Art Farm one can watch the laying of an emu egg, wrestle with billy goat gruff and witness art-in-the-making. It's a unique place.

Behind the scenes, something else is happening at the Art Farm. Three brothers are making wine, and very good wine too.

Art Farm owner/operators are brothers Dudley and Jerome Knill and Maynard Albertson. Jerome is the farm's overseer, Maynard its chief winemaker, and Dudley is the brother who converted the barn into an efficient home winery in 10 days.

1984 marks the third year of farm home winemaking, a new, annual event that utilizes all three men and their families. (Brother Herb Knill is noted as among the best on the bottling line, the other brothers say. Herb wasn't around, however, to defend himself.)

THE CONSENSUS among brothers is that the inspiration to make wine came from Maynard, who owns Cal-Test Laboratories in Sonoma.

Maynard tells how inspiration struck.

"We were paying too much for our habits. Dudley and I had a hangover one day and we were discussing it at L&N Donuts. It was then that we thought I had better take a class and learn how to make wine," he says.

Ten days after their discussion in the donut shop, the Art Farm barn was renovated, air conditioned and supplied with equipment needed to press, crush, ferment, barrel-age and bottle wines.

For that feat, the brothers thank Dudley, whom they refer to as the family entrepreneur.

Art Farm wines made the last two years include Chardonnay from Doc Holden's vineyard, a 1982 Cabernet and a 1983 Zinfandel. This year's harvest will make Art Farm wines Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Gewurztraminer, and maybe some Zinfandel.

ALL WINES MADE at the farm are fermented absolutely dry ("because that's the way we like 'em," says Jerome) and all but Gewurztraminer take a stay in French oak. White wines are cold fermented.

Which wine is the maker's favorite is a tough one to answer, if a wrinkled

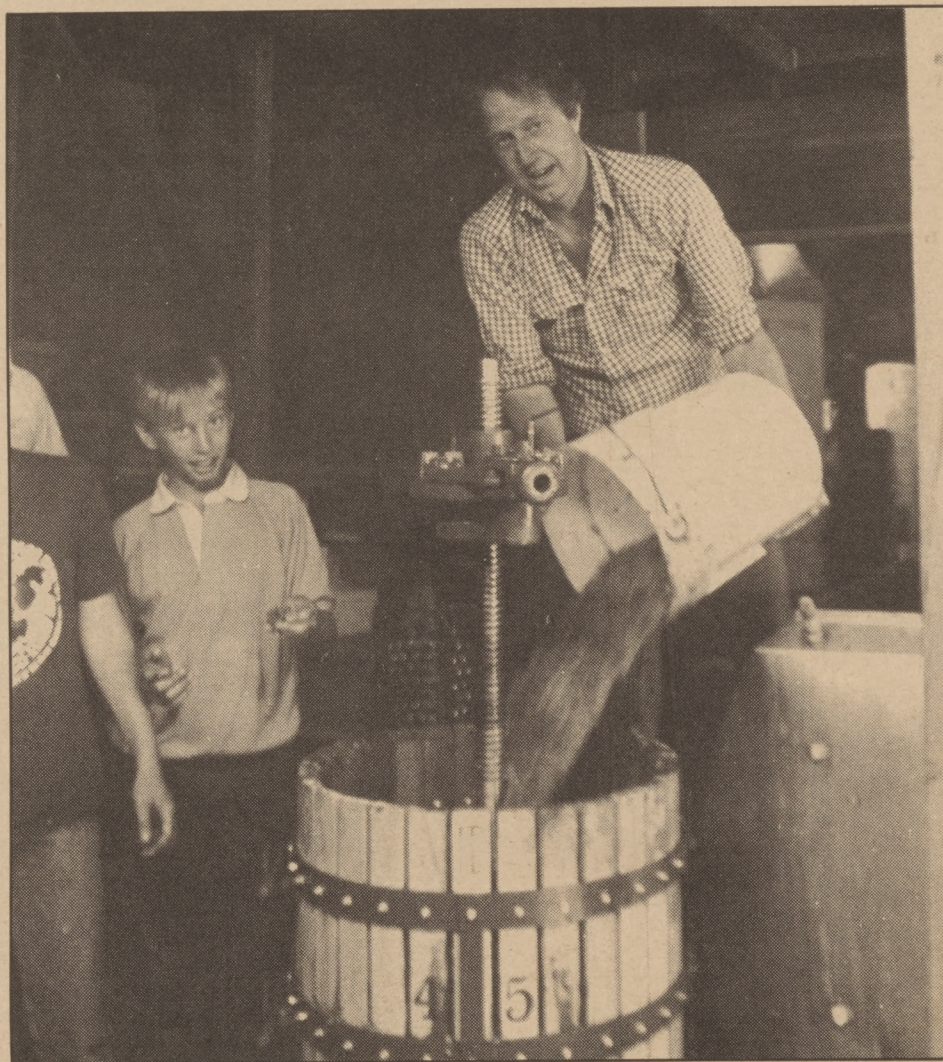


Photo by Rhonda Parks

MAKING WINE ON THE FARM

Young Todd Albertson (l), son of wine maker Maynard Albertson, supervises Dudley's (r) work. Dudley converted building to winery

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brow means anything.

"Let's see," says Maynard in concentration, "our best wines...the Chard and the Cab...but that Zin, that's good too."

At harvest time, Art Farm people and friends wind down from the day's hard work by having a barbecue and playing a little volleyball. Jerome likes to talk more than he likes play-

the art of taking photographs and the art of making wine.

"Both are meticulous jobs and you have to clean in your work habits," says Jerome.

For now, Art Farm winemakers "make super premium wines from premium grapes from our wonderful valley," says Jerome, both for fun and family consumption. Future

Claude Berthoud

Living a dream with his home winemaking

When Claude Berthoud first arrived in Sonoma Valley 12 years ago, he sowed "with great pain" his grape seeds as part of his dream of becoming a winemaker, the same dream he brought with him to this country from his native Switzerland.

Within his six acres, Claude has planted varieties which have yielded the family bountiful harvests of grapes - some just to sell to local wineries to offset the cost of maintaining the vineyard and the rest he harvests for his family's own consumption.

"I have to get a good yield every year, because I drink a lot of wine," Claude jests.

Claude also planted the seed of family winemaking with his eldest son Mike who is near graduation at Fresno State University, considered to be the best school of enology in the nation. It will be Mike's task, Claude says, to bring the family's fledgling winery business into the world of modern viticulture. For Claude, however, who is now semi-retired from the restaurant business, winemaking is strictly for fun.

Claude once entered "Bear-2" homemade wine in the 1976 Sonoma

County Harvest Fair and won a gold medal, but Claude was soon turned off to the growing commercialism among the small vintners and refused to return to the Fair.

What he prefers is getting the best out of his grapes and enjoying the fruits of his labors. He grows a Golden Chasselas grape - like those growing in the Geneva area of his birth - as well as Johannisberg Riesling, Merlot and Zinfandel. He sells the very best grapes to Kenwood Winery.

When asked if he had a particular method for growing his grapes, he says dryly: "I do whatever I need to do. The grapes are ready when they're ready. I just have to be ready for them."

This means that Claude and his wife Ann, along with 30-40 neighbors, all help out with the harvest in the old tradition. Claude says, "We all pick, we crush, then we make a big party."

IT SOUNDS like a simple operation and that's just how Claude likes it. He'll leave the complexities of business to son Mike. "There's too much red tape in going to commercial," he explains about his no-nonsense ap-

TURN TO PAGE 20

ing ball on a hot afternoon, so he kind of liked being asked and answering a lot of questions.

"Our culture has turned winemaking into a very scientific endeavor," says Jerome the would-be philosopher. "Maynard is very scientific in his approach to life. He's a grand winemaker. He's better than great, he's grand."

JEROME IS A free-lance photographer who sees a similarity between

plans, however, may include sharing wines with others.

"I would like to be legally bonded so we can become a premium boutique winery where people can come to enjoy art and wine," says Jerome.

"Our Sonoma Valley grows the best grapes, the very best grapes, in the whole world," says Jerome. "Fortunately, this is our home. That's another reason we were inspired to make our own wines."

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Berthoud

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

proach to winemaking. "Besides, commercial wineries have to become much more sophisticated because their product has to travel. Mine's a much more natural product, no chemicals. It isn't filtered."

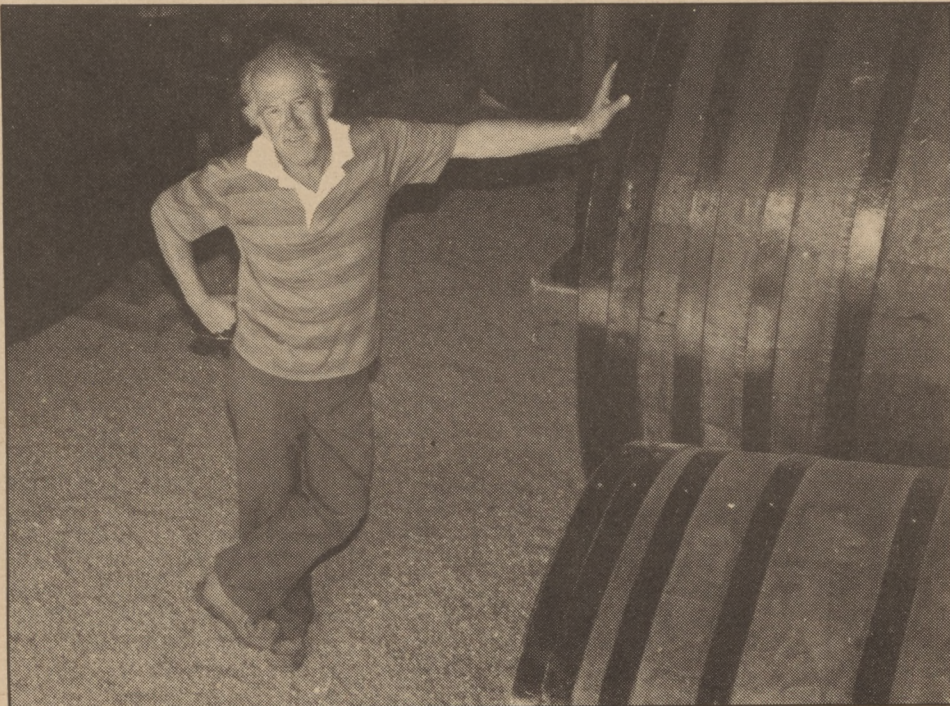
Claude also prefers to do most of the maintenance work himself which means a great deal of hard physical work. Recently he's switched from cutting the weeds to discing and he

sprays as little as possible to preserve the natural quality of his wines.

"My wife Ann is a good cook. That's why I have to work in the vineyards," he says pointing to his still firm stomach. "It's my hobby to begin with. It's seasonal, so there's no repetition and the climate is perfect. I love it."

When the work gets hard or the wine business too complex, he defers to his sons Alec and Mike to take over once and a while.

"I like them around, so I can just sit down and start drinking my wine." ●



BERTHOUD IN HIS CELLAR
'It's a hobby..I love it.'

Photo by Mike Shandrick

Jim Kent

Fire fighter's right at home
with his Acme Wine Company

By **RHONDA PARKS**
I-T Staff Writer

Jim Kent learned how to make wine when he was a teenager. He bought a home wine kit, and made a few different varieties from oranges, dandelions, even tomatoes. He says it was fun, but it had some drawbacks.

"You can't buy tomato wine because people don't like it," he says frankly. "It was just alcoholic."

Today, Kent makes wine, but he doesn't do so with tomatoes. At the recent State Fair, his homemade 1979 Cabernet Sauvignon took third place, and his 1983 Chenin Blanc, second place.

The label obviously had nothing to do with it.

Kent's wine carries the name Acme Wine Company, which bears the winemaker's symbol, an old, beat up pickup truck. (Label design and art by the winemaker.)

"The truck is sitting out in front of my house; it's been there seven

years," Kent explains. "It's kind of like I am. It's a neat old truck with lots of potential, but it hasn't been tapped yet."

CONVERSATION WITH KENT is dotted with punchy humor and a smile like a kid, which is in line with his belief that winemaking is a light-hearted endeavor and smugness is no fun.

Jim Kent's interest in wine and its making lead him toward books and to wineries where folks were willing to share their knowledge with a beginning home winemaker.

"If you're interested, you'll learn a lot," says Kent.

He soon forgot about making wine from the stuff salads are made and began experimenting with wine grapes.

"The first time I made good wine was in 1977," says Kent, "I got it right."

Unfortunately, he didn't know he



Photo by Rhonda Parks

THE WINEMASTER OF ACME WINE CO.
Sonoma Valley resident Jim Kent

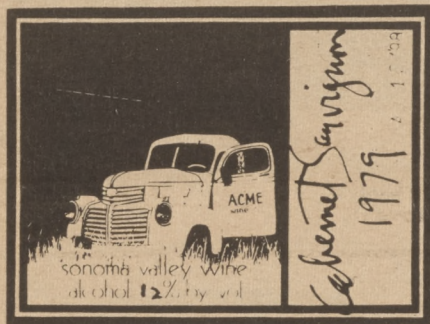
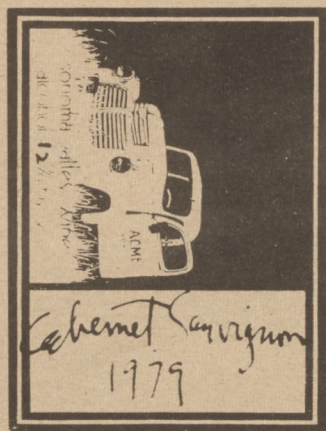
Kent

got it right. In 1978 he decided to give up, and that year he made no wine.

But a surprise awaited when he opened the '77 Cabernet the following year. It was good. So enticed, Kent started making wine again in 1979, which produced the Cabernet that placed at the State Fair.

KENT USES THE "feel it as you go along" method of winemaking. So far, he's made Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petite Sirah.

He's never made enough of any one varietal to warrant the purchase of a barrel for aging, so Kent uses French



KENT'S CAB LABEL

oak shavings which he toasts up nicely in an iron frying pan. When the shavings turn the color of coffee with cream, says Kent, they are dumped into the wine, where they settle and are later racked off.

"Cabernet is what I guess I'm the best at," says Kent with a modest, sheepish grin. "I never seem to have any problems and it comes out real good."

Good though his wines may be, Kent has no intention of making wine as a commercial endeavor. "I don't like the idea of being a businessman. But I might like to go to work for some other winery," he says. His living is made fighting fires in Oakland.

Kent lives in the Vineburg area with his wife Joan and his children, Oliver, age eight, and Daisy, age four. Just recently, the family planted a little vineyard in front of their house.

WHAT GRAPES HE doesn't grow, Kent buys from local growers, a practice which carries certain privileges not enjoyed by commercial interests.

Just folks kind of guys who are local, neighborly and making wine at home are treated like old friends. They get the pick of the crop.

Jim Kent gets great grapes from the get go, a sure-fire way to uncover (or discover) winemaking talent as yet untapped.

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A few of the many changing chef's-choice entrees

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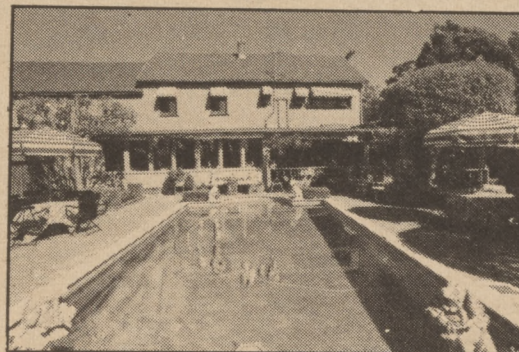
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Vic McWilliams

Pharmacist using his skills in racking up awards for his homemade wines

By RHONDA PARKS
I-T Staff Writer

Come harvest time, friends of Vic McWilliams roll out of bed in the dark morning hours to pick grapes. They do this even though they may prefer to stay in bed, keep warm, read the Sunday paper, and maybe even sleep in.

But his friends do so with good reason; one is that he's a nice guy, and there are worse people to be with at the crack of dawn.

Another reason (and better still) is that he is a great home winemaker, and his friends will fill their heads with the fruit of his talent as reward for their work.

When picking begins, the hour is more suitable to coffee than wine, but by the time the grapes are brought in, crushed and pressed, it is time to pour wine, raise glasses, drink and enjoy.

For a guy who started out making wine in a chicken shed, McWilliams has come a long way in the pursuance of his ambition. That he now is offered first pick of some the Valley's finest vineyards attests to his excellent reputation among grape growers.

IN COMPETITION his wines have done well too, although he's been making wine just five years.

At the State Fair this year, seven of the eight wines McWilliams entered garnered recognition from judges: 1981 Zinfandel, first place; 1981 and 1983 Chardonnays, and 1982 Zinfandel (a dessert wine fortified with brandy), third place awards. Honorable Mention was attributed both his 1982 Late Harvest Zinfandel and 1981 Pinot Noir.

McWilliams has given the name Castle to those wines bearing a label, for it is on Castle Road that he lives and makes his wines. Next door to his home is a one-acre vineyard of Chardonnay, which he bought last year.

That his recent purchase bears the fruit Chardonnay is significant; McWilliams sees the varietal as his personal winemaking challenge.

"I've tried making them all, but Chardonnay is a wine I really want to accomplish. I've had success, (with the grape) but I haven't accomplished it yet," he says.

Judging from awards earned so far, McWilliams should have no trouble achieving his goal.

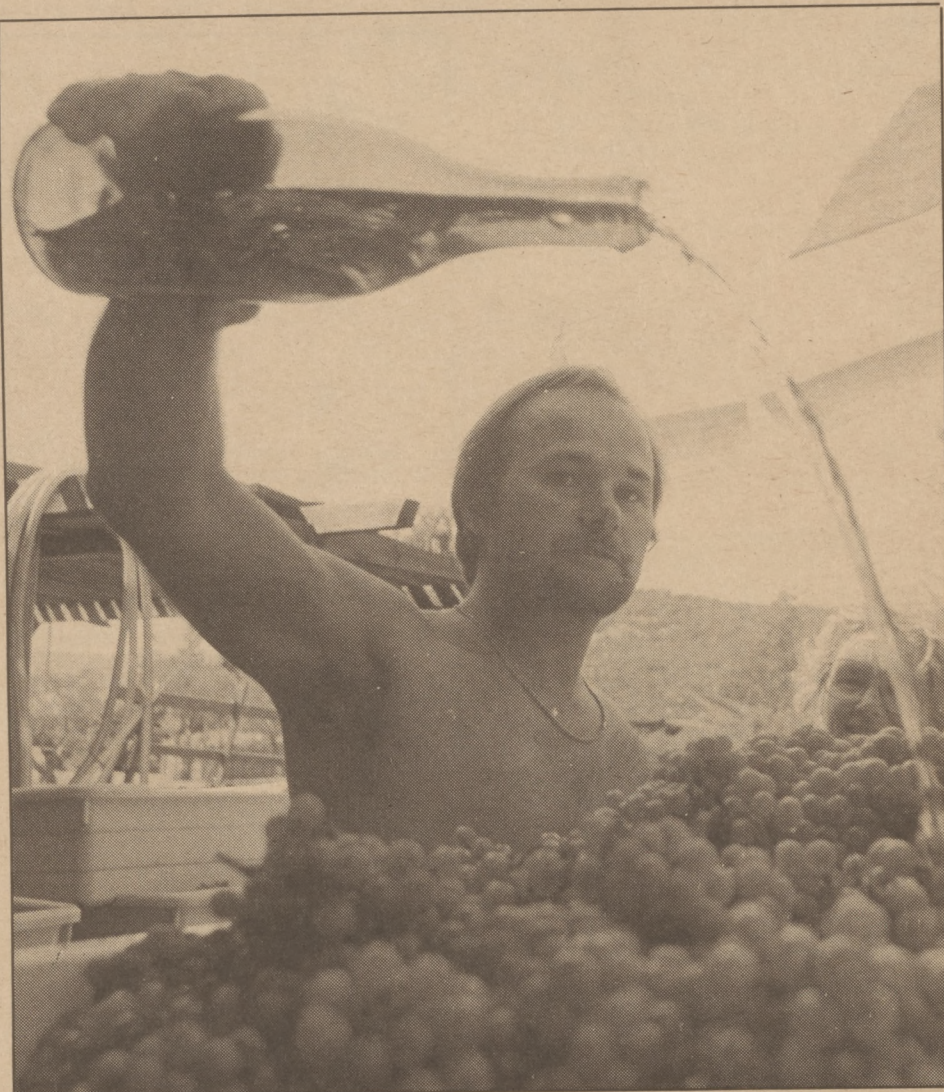


Photo by Rhonda Parks

HOME WINEMAKER VIC MCWILLIAMS
Pouring it on in wine competitions

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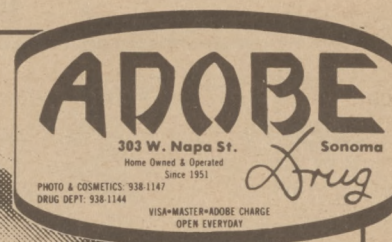


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Photo by Rhonda Parks

JON EARLY WITH MCWILLIAMS
Early and other neighbors help out at crush time

MCWILLIAMS, WHO MAKES his living as a pharmacist at Sonoma Valley Hospital, was first exposed to winemaking as a boy growing up in North Dakota, an unlikely place to witness the ritual of the grapes.

"My dad used to make wine," McWilliams remembers with a chuckle. "He was always down in the basement like a little chemist."

As a serious project however, McWilliams really learned the craft of winemaking from Dennis Richardson. In 1980, after having made wine together for two years, Richardson founded his own winery in Schellville, and McWilliams set out as an independent home winemaker.

While the men maintain their separate endeavors in wine making, they still compare the results of their work by swapping tastes of wine and sharing praise and criticism.

McWilliams makes his wines with the help of three main supporter/helpers: his girlfriend, Gail Mikronis; and next-door neighbors Jon and Jackie Early. When the fruit is ready for picking, crushing or pressing, these three are there. In their reliability, they are McWilliams' ever-ready work crew.

WITH OBVIOUS PRIDE in the result of his neighbor's skill, Early says, "A lot of wineries evolved from the work of home winemakers. It makes sense that you would practice at home a few years."

But more important than skill, says McWilliams, is the quality of the grapes from which the wine is made. In concert with his philosophy, McWilliams goes for the best fruit he can find.

The home winemaker raves about the grapes he is able to hand select and pick from the Durell Ranch, which produced the fruit for his award-winning 1981 Zin. For details such as which row to pick, McWilliams is assisted by ranch viticultur-

ist Steve Hill, whose intimacy with the soil and vines gives the winemaker a head start on quality.

The winemaker and grower swap talent, learning from one another as they go.

Fruit to make other Castle wines are picked from vineyards belonging to former professional basketball player Clifford Ray, and from the Pronzini, Ogaz and Spottswode vineyards.

While McWilliams makes white wine from the Chardonnay grape only, he is experimenting with sparkling wines and a still Blanc de Noir. This year he may make wine from the Syrah grape as well.

ALMOST ALL GRAPES picked for McWilliams' Castle wines are chosen for the making of wines fermented absolutely dry, with no residual sugar. Exceptions to the rule are those grapes inhabited by the mold botrytis, a somewhat rare condition which produces a sweet dessert-style wine.

After careful selection and hand picking, Castle wines see French oak, which McWilliams prefers because it imparts a smooth richness he feels cannot be found in American oak coo- perage.

Making wine is "a love," says McWilliams, while his work as pharmacist, is "a livelihood."

At harvest time, every spare, waking minute is spent coddling juice from the grape so as to make a better wine.

"The support and involvement of the people around me keeps me going," says the young home winemaker. "It's an expensive hobby, but more than that, it's an art. There's a lot of satisfaction in it."

Satisfaction must come easy when friends forego morning comfort to cut fruit from the vine, all in pursuit of one man's wine.



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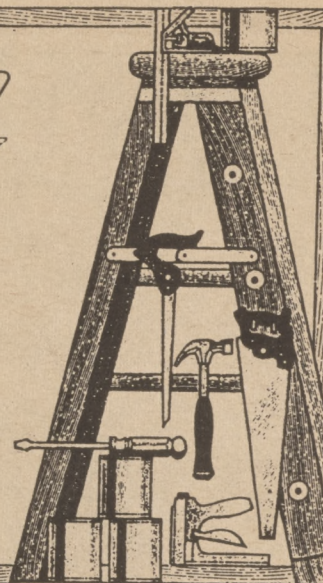
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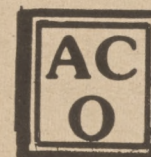


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The Serafinis and Zepponis

With them home winemaking is truly a family affair

By JOAN NORBERG

"As a child I remember winemaking time in San Francisco. We lived on Telegraph Hill and the big trucks brought the grapes and I remember we would hand on the back of those trucks. It was a very special time."

These early memories of Phyllis Serafini are part of the Serafini-Zepponi family tradition of home winemaking that has endured from its roots in North Central Italy through the move to America.

Three generations of these winemakers live in Sonoma Valley and proudly practice their art. Mary Zepponi, Phyllis' mother, is matriach of the family and still lives on the family property near Four Corners. Phyllis and her husband, Aldo Serafini, have three sons, Steven, 34, David, 29, and Gerarde, 21. Steven and David both have families and plan for their children to continue the winemaking. Phyllis' brother, Gino Zepponi, is a professional winemaker with ZD Winery in Rutherford, Napa Valley, who gladly joins in the family winemaking. Mary's brother-in-law, Armando

Blasi, also helps during winemaking time.

Trying to listen to seven of them explain the family tradition of winemaking is not highly productive, so Steven was selected as spokesman on the generalities of the tradition and David spoke about the specifics of the winemaking.

"Wine is in our family," explained Steven. "This is a family operation just for our consumption and it goes along with the Italian tradition of good food. The men make the wine and the women cook the food. Although if you know Italy at all you know it's a matriarchal society."

THE FAMILY knows about food also because they own and operate Il Desinare Catering on Broadway. When the women aren't cooking for the catering firm they cook for the family gatherings which are a perfect time for sharing and comparing the wine.

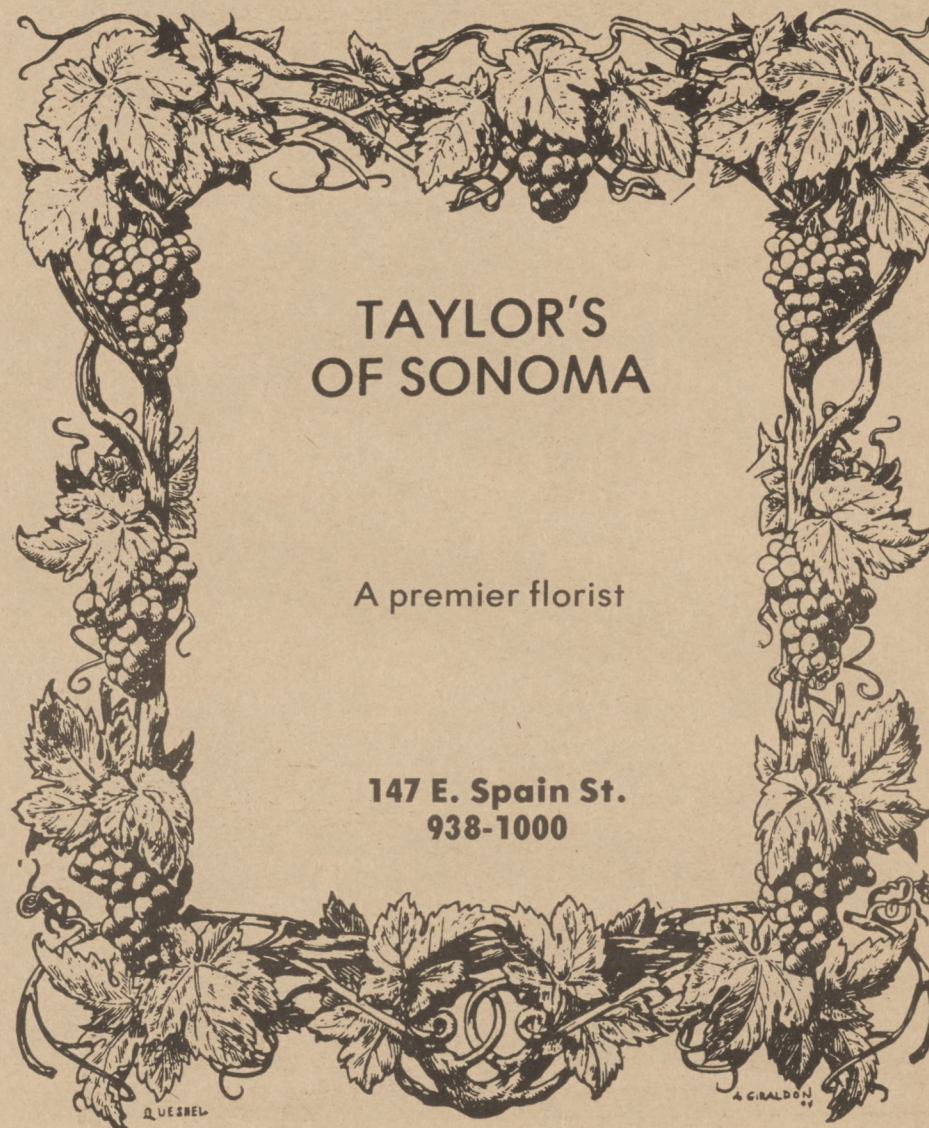
"After the wine was made, all the families would get together and compare their wines," said Phyllis. "They



Photo by Richard Ammon

ALL IN THE FAMILY

From left: Aldo Serafini; Armando Blasi; and brothers Gerard, Steve and David Serafini, join in work

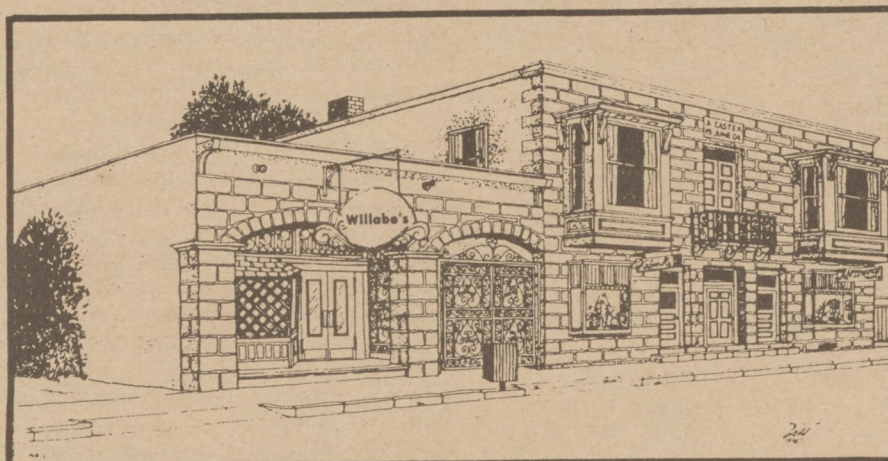


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BOTTLING TIME

Everybody chips in, including (from left): Steve Serafini; Aldo Serafini; David Serafini; Gerard Serafini; Armando Blasi

all thought theirs was the best."

"They didn't even bottle it then," said Steven. "They would put a spout on the cask and serve it from there."

David admitted that the new generation changed the winemaking tradition during the '70s.

"When our grandfathers made the wine they drank it right away," he said. "Now we bottle it and age it. We age it in the American oak barrels for two years and then it ages in the bottle for a year."

The family makes red wine, affectionately called "the ink."

"This stuff will stain you," said Steven. "It's a deep, rich, red wine. It needs to be consumed with food and it's great to use in cooking."

"We like to say we've taken it beyond 'Dago Red.' We make a fine, red table wine."

THE WINE is a blend of Cabernet and Zinfandel grapes and "sometimes we throw in a couple other types of grapes."

"My husband and I planted the grapes in 1951 on this property," Mary Zepponi said proudly. "These are some of the grapes we use in our wine."

The family also has Chardonnay grapes planted on the property. "Talk about getting back to the earth," said Phyllis. "Planting those grapes was hard work."

The family picks the grapes, after David has determined the sugar con-

tent is correct. David does all the testing, racking and sampling of the wine.

The family has a crusher and two hand presses they use. The wine is fermented in a redwood cask and the family members take turns hand punching the cap (stirring the must) every four hours during fermentation. Fermentation takes five to eight days.

THE WINE is aged in oak barrels and then placed in bottles unfiltered. This means more sediment in the bottle, but is a more natural way of wine-making.

Although the winemaking is not on a professional level, it is definitely more sophisticated than the first-time amateur winemaker. The family has years of experience in winemaking and the proper equipment of casks, presses, crushers and barrels. They also have a dark, cool area to store the bottled wine.

It is in the "blending" of the wine that experimentation takes place. There is a casual recipe of Cabernet and Zinfandel grapes, "with other grapes thrown in."

"We have also made pure Zinfandel, Carbernet and Pinot Noir wines," said David. "We also made white wine, but it was too much hassle."

The real pride of the family is in their own "fine, red table wine" that is gladly shared with family and friends with the advice "It tastes best with food."



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Milo Shephard and Ben Fruth

Longtime valley residents find a special joy in making their own wine

By JERRY PARKER

Just down the road from Milo Shephard's comfortable, rambling home on the old Jack London ranch in Glen Ellen is his winery. It may be the smallest winery in Sonoma Valley but it produces high quality homemade wines.

The production of these wines—Pinot Noir, Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Sirah—involves a bunch of people and makes for many

joyous get-togethers. Wine is a delightfully civilizing thing, both when you make it and when you drink it.

Shephard's sons, Neil and Brian, head the work crew that puts out Jack London Ranch wines. Helping are members of the family, friends and neighbors, passersby, ranch hands, almost anyone who shows up and wants to work.

Milo Shephard, a tough, burly, sentimental grape grower and diligent guardian of the Jack London legacy,

(he is London's grandnephew), shows you an album of color photos taken during these winemaking sessions. The women are all beautiful and the men are smiling, what with all this beauty and the inspiration from their work.

Production takes place in a little building snuggled into a hillside. It is built of native redwood, with logs as rafters and homemade redwood shakes on top of them. One wall is made of rock and the others will also

be that way one day.

"I don't have to do much", smiled Shephard, "just kind of supervise, everyone knows what they're doing and they're having fun. It's a family thing, they all kick in".

SHEPARD MAKES Zinfandel and Petit Sirah wines from grapes from the Kunde family's Wildwood Vineyards in Kenwood and Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon from his own grapes. He has won gold, silver and

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bronze medals for his wines at the annual Harvest Fair held in Santa Rosa.

"We do basically everything a commercial winery does except filtering," said Shepard. Instead he racks the wine, which is aged in oak barrels for two years before it is bottled. These are full-bodied wines of superb flavor and most of them with 13 percent alcohol. Mike Benziger, of the Glen Ellen Winery, is chemist for Shepard.

The bottled wines are stored in the crawl space under Shepard's house. In addition to being the family's private stock, they are lavished upon many friends throughout the year.

Shepard started making his home-made wines in 1975 in old stone buildings that originally were used by Jack

London. These buildings have since become part of the expanded Jack London State Park.

Shepard is general manager of the Irving Shepard Trust. The late Irving

Shepard was Jack London's nephew and Milo's father. Management of the trust includes responsibility for new editions of Jack London's novels and letters.

Shepard began to grow grapes in 1971 and sells all of his output to the Kenwood Winery. They are marketed under a special Jack London Vineyards label. The quality of the grapes comes from the alluvial soil, which combined with the frost-free climate, produces grapes with just the right sugar and acid content.

A graduate of Cal Poly, Shepard was formerly a dairy rancher and later a ranger in the state park system here.

OLDTIMER BEN FRUTH, a retired Sonoma fireman, is at the other end of the spectrum and makes red wine in his garage as a hobby, something he's been doing since 1950. He does as little to the grapes as possible,

TURN TO PAGE 28

"I don't have to do much... just kind of supervise, everyone knows what they're doing and they're having fun. It's a family thing, they all kick in"

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Photo by Richard Ammon
MILO SHEPHARD
 Making home wines since 1975

Shephard/Fruth

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

uses homemade equipment and obviously enjoys what he is doing.

He is modest, offhand and self-deprecatory but don't let him fool you. He knows that nature doesn't need very much help from man to produce a quite drinkable wine.

Grapes will turn into wine on the vine if nothing is done to them. To make wine at home, says Fruth, "is a simple process". He learned from an old Italian, who showed Fruth how it was done in Italy.

There were several grape vines on the property he bought in Sonoma when he came here from San Francisco in 1950, not long after he was mustered out of the Navy. He used slips from these vines to grow others and now has manybe 20 or so. He doesn't know what kind of grapes the vines produce. He makes around 100 gallons of wine, more or less, each season.

Fruth crushes his grapes in a unit he made himself. It's a traditional crusher, a cylinder made of slats with spaces between them inside a geared track scavenged from an oldtime horizontal copying camera.

A circular piece of cardboard at the bottom of a rod that goes up or down at a turn of the crank on the track and the grapes are crushed this way. Afterword Fruth puts the juice in five-gallon bottles such as bottled water comes in.

THE WINE is aged 10 months or so



Photo by Richard Ammon
BEN FRUTH
 He designed and built this crusher himself



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and then Fruth - who does no filtering-carefully siphons it out of the big glass bottles into fifth-size bottles he collects here and there.

The bottled wine is stored in a small wine cellar under the floor of his shop. Water sometimes gets in here but the bottles of wine apparently are not harmed.

"They just float around in the water", said Fruth. "It's part of the fun to see how dirty they get, they look antique."

Fruth has more time for winemaking and his other projects now that he's retired from the Sonoma fire department. He is an astronomer and has an observatory above his shop. The dome of the observatory can be moved around in a circle and through an opening in it Fruth can look at any part of the sky.

He is working on two other telescopes at present. A wizard at automotive and mechanical as well as scientific things, he also built many improvements at the Sonoma firehouse when he worked there.

Fruth likes to remind one that wine is the oldest alcoholic beverage and "goes back to Egyptian days". With disarming modesty he says, "Anybody can make wine, then you put it in a container and let it sit there. It's a simple process, you don't have to put much effort in it."

Maybe Fruth makes it look to easy but he has certainly found a way to have fun while making his wine. His family gifted him with a color label that he puts on his bottles. The label says "Fruth's Old German Winery," and in a note at the bottom adds, "Squeezed by hand and foot, Sonoma, California."



Photo by Richard Ammon

BEN FRUTH

He does as little to the grapes as possible, uses homemade equipment and obviously enjoys what he is doing



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Gene Sperring

Teacher finds a 'creative outlet' in producing homemade wines

By JOAN CASSERLY
I-T Staff Writer

Gene Sperring shuns calling his home winemaking practice a mere hobby.

"When I think of hobby, I think of sticking stamps in a book. This is an art form," he says emphatically. "Making wine takes a degree of creativity. It definitely is my creative outlet."

A native of Sonoma Valley and father of two, Sperring developed his winemaking skills more than 10 years ago. The task has blossomed into a rewarding, yet time-consuming chore, one Sperring admits he can be a bit overzealous about.

He points to numerous bottles and jugs, in different sizes and shapes, which clutter the floor of the basement of his Sonoma home. "This is bordering on getting out of hand," he says with a slight chuckle.

"It is fairly easy to make a nice wine but the problem is before you know it, you want to make five or six wines," he continues.

"It is an all year job. I sometimes wind up out here racking (transferring wine from one bottle to another to remove sediment) every night during the winter. And before you know it,

you can become a small winery," he laughs.

Indeed, Sperring could be considered the master of his own mini-winery. Sperring produces some 50 to 60 gallons of wine a season. His multitude of wine varieties include Petite Sirah, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Johannisberg Riesling.

With the exception of Gewurztraminer, Sperring says he has "made them all."

His ultimate goal is to narrow the focus of his winemaking to only two varieties — a red and a white. That way, much of the racking would be alleviated and time would be saved.

Though his primary reason for partaking in winemaking is because it is a challenge, Sperring says there are also economical considerations.

"I can't afford the wines of my taste unless I make them," he says. "It is a real challenge to try to duplicate a \$17 bottle of wine."

Winemaking can also be personally fulfilling, Sperring notes. Since 1979 he has been awarded a bronze, three silver and a gold medal for his wines at the Sonoma County Harvest Fair.

BECAUSE Sperring is friends with

many local vineyard owners, he gets the opportunity to acquire his grapes predominantly through gleaning. Gleaning entails going to vineyards following the harvest and picking the grapes which were overlooked.

"It (gleaning) is time consuming," Sperring admits, "But it is well worth it when you consider the price of grapes." When it's time for gleaning the local vineyards, Sperring is assisted by his wife Cathie, son Stuart and daughter Jennifer.

Sperring also grows his own Chardonnay and Riesling grapes at the rear of his eastside home.

His love for winemaking is something he shares with friends. Various pieces of equipment, ideas and winemaking tips are shifted from home to home during winemaking season.

"There is a group that has crushes together. Later, we have tastings...and share tips and discussions," Sperring explains.

HOWEVER, MAKING wine is not Gene Sperring's greatest love or sole creative outlet. Teaching is.

Sperring, a health/science instructor at Altimira Intermediate School, says he would never abandon his teaching career to go into the winery

'I can't afford the wines of my taste unless I make them... it is a real challenge to try to duplicate a \$17 bottle of wine'

business full time.

"I teach best and can be more creative in a classroom," he says. (His educational background does come in handy in his winemaking). And he speaks openly with the students about his outside "hobby." Sperring teaches a course to eighth graders which specifically addresses the issue of alcohol abuse.

"We tell them the difference between alcohol use and alcohol abuse," Sperring explains. "They (the students) live in wine country and I explain it in terms of an art form. I think they can understand."



DOCTORS OF WINE—A graduate of enology is considered to be one who makes wine, but this is not necessarily true, as many of the great winemakers of the world are not enologists. The proper definition never heard is that they are doctors-of-wine.

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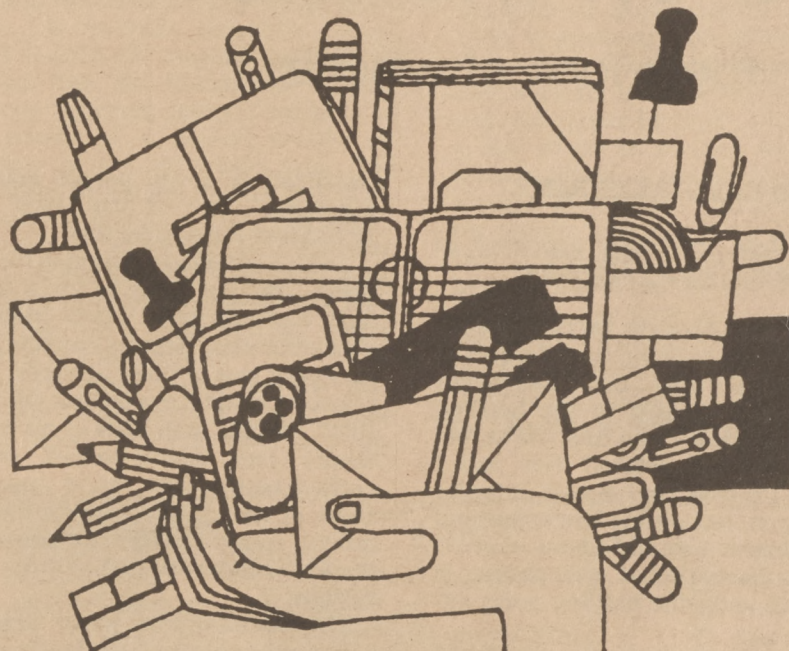
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Life on the line

An insider's look at wineries

By GAYL DECOURSEY

This article previously appeared in Wine Country Magazine

I had often brought visiting friends and relatives to enjoy the wineries in the Sonoma Valley, but I had never given much thought to the bottling procedure itself - who fills, corks and labels all those bottles? Nor had I thought I'd ever find myself actually working on the bottling line in the cold dark cellar of a small Sonoma winery. I was to discover that wine tasting is one thing and wine bottling quite another.

The bottling room was a sterile place filled with hoses, boxes, tanks, carts and curious-looking machines, as well as an overpowering aroma of a new wine. Mercifully, our room was open to the outside world, with empty boxes continually loaded in and full boxes carried out. The bottling line

consisted of seven people and four machines. Two of the latter were brand-new Italian imports.

I was positioned in one spot for eight hours, my job being to place aluminum capsules over newly filled and corked bottles. Besides capping a bottle every two to three seconds, I was to keep a critical eye on possible "low-fills" (bottles with little or no wine in them) and double-corked or no-corked bottles that might appear in front of me on the conveyor belt. I quickly found a rhythm for dispensing the aluminum caps and spotting aberrations.

The Italian import on my right was supposed to clutch each bottle firmly and secure the capsules. Unfortunately for me, my new co-worker exhibited some quirks its first few days, coming several times to a complete standstill, or worse yet, picking up a bottle at the wrong angle and flinging it to the floor with true European



A WORKER ON THE BOTTLING LINE
A different perspective on the 'romance' of winemaking

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flair. This activity, without fail, brought me out of whatever day-dream I was pursuing and compelled me to move quickly out of the range of flying glass and wine. It is truly painful to see good Chardonnay which has been nine months in the making find its way to the drains, never to grace a candlelit table for two.

Specialists came to visit our sick machine, but its workings were so complicated (and so Italian, I reasoned) that each came away with a different diagnosis. Everyone agreed that it was just a matter of 'ironing out the kinks;' once it found its stride there would be no stopping it. I must admit that this machine, however temperamental, smooths and irons aluminum to perfection, far better

than any human could. On the other hand, no human would be allowed to throw bottles of perfectly good Chenin Blanc or Pinot Noir or Gewurztraminer on the floor and continue to draw a paycheck.

Accidents were not infrequent, I was to discover. Some mornings it was as if all the machines had banded together during the night and voted to strike: The wine-filler decided that two inches of wine was sufficient for each bottle, the corker only half-corked all bottles and the labeler went berserk and glued labels to the conveyor belt instead of the bottles. Close encounters between bottles and machines caused frequent explosions, and the bottling room was usually awash with rivers of wine. These acci-

dents would cause the whole line to come to a halt until the problem was solved.

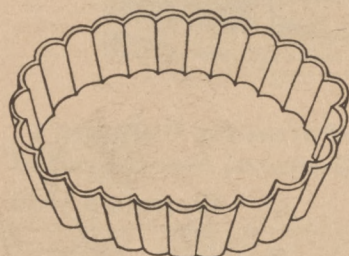
While the offender was being dealt with, the humans naturally gravitated toward the sunshine outside to discuss how the breakdown of machinery reflected today's society. In the middle of a heated debate on whether or not we would soon find ourselves on a quest for fire due to an impending technological "mistake" we would be called back in to find our places as box-emptier, gluer of labels, capper, box-filler, box gluer and pallet-loader. On a good day we would bottle over 9,000 bottles.

The six other people on the line were not, surprisingly, young or fresh out of school. The four men and two

women ranged in age from 23 to 42. They were poet, housewife, traveler and student who bottle occasionally to supplement their incomes. Since bottling is seasonal, and different wineries bottle at different times, bottlers can work for a few weeks at one winery, take some time off, and bottle for a few weeks at another winery. The position allows a certain freedom and change of scenery. Thirty-nine-year-old Sylvia, who places the empty bottles at the start of the the conveyor belt, manages real estate on the side, but enjoys her work and co-workers at the various wineries up and down the valley. Although the work is routine, there is little pressure, and the pay is far superior to that of a clerk's.

TURN TO PAGE 34

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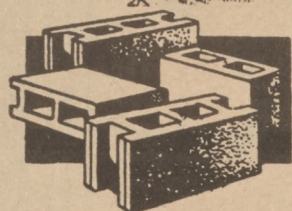
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Life on the line

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

Ben, the oldest and most gregarious member of our team, is a 42-year-old poet and general philosopher with at least one idea on nearly every subject. He tells me of his life's highs and lows, his days as a touring rock musician and his nights as a drunk inmate of a Mexican jail. I am properly awed, and he continues to wax eloquent about his idols - a mystic poet who "burned himself out at eighteen and never wrote another word" and an aging alcoholic rancher who "is burning himself out also, but still has a lust for life." When listening to Ben, I always feel as if I have been transported through a Kerouac timewarp and we may all have to pile into his '35 Ford and head for Bakersfield immediately. Ben has had several books of poetry published. He says that he can hardly get up in the morning without being hit by an inspiration - "Man, it's like all the time, you know?" I nod,

bottler - he plays "Pink Floyd" in his head all day long. His silence is now understandable. I conclude that Brian, although 20 years younger than Ben and probably blissfully ignorant of Kerouac and his buddies, is keeping the hippie tradition alive and well.

Back at the loading deck, the rest of the bottlers are discussing the formation of a winery baseball team. The winemaker, Don, is trying to drum up a little team spirit, if not a baseball and bat, which nobody seems to own. The poet steps forward, promising to fulfill a position he has held life-long - in left field. I pray that this odd assortment of individuals never has to meet the Butcher's Team from Safeway on the local diamond.

Don asks me about my constant note taking, and I tell him about my interest in writing. He winks knowingly and tells me he, too, has a book burning inside him about the wine world. Why doesn't he write it? Well, he figures it will probably be a block-

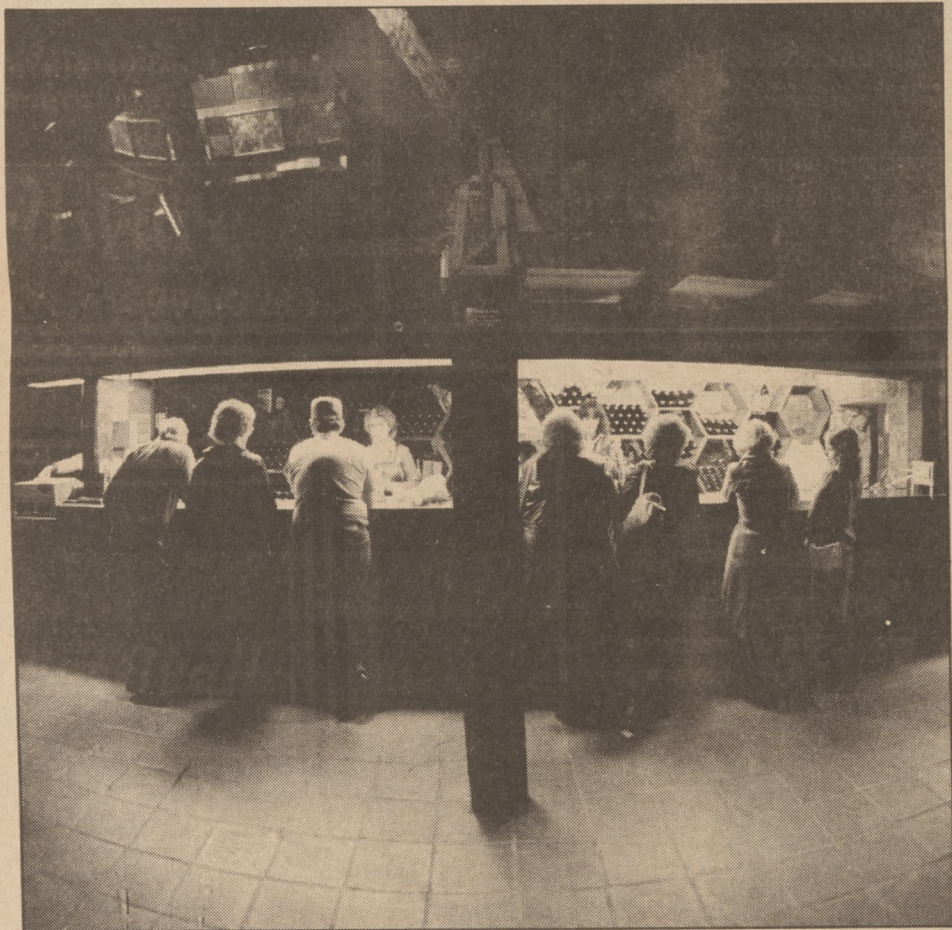


Photo by Richard Ammon

INSIDE A TASTING ROOM

'Wine pourer can spot a connoisseur immediately'

keeping a straight face.

During a break, I walk through the old oak forests which abound in the area and am entranced by the beauty of the wild-flowers and the sounds of the birds in the copses. The first Californian vineyardists who settled here 120 years ago also must have felt the magic in this benign valley. I am struck by the paradox of working in a foul-smelling cellar and taking coffee breaks in a forest!

In the oak grove I come upon Brian, the youngest and quietest among us. When I ask him what he thinks about, hour after hour, box after box, he says he follows the wise words of a fellow-

buster, and he would have to be prepared for lingering hassles over movie rights. While he is talking I attempt to visualize "Vintage '82" or "My life and Time in the Vines" as a best seller. At some time in the future, he tells me, this book is going to put him on the map. I tell him not to sell out to Hollywood too soon.

We all move back into the work area just in time to display our talents to a group of 30 visitors on tour. It is interesting that not once during a visit have the machines hurled bottles or stopped production. Machines and humans are seen to be working in per-

TURN TO PAGE 36

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Life on the line

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 34

fect harmony.

During the first days of bottling, I felt ill at ease and tended to stare meaningfully at the passing bottles when touring parties came into the work area. But realizing that some people wanted to make contact, I began to smile and chat with anybody who wanted to inspect my aluminum caps more closely. One day a gentleman ventured to ask if I was having fun on my job. I leaned over the conveyor belt and whispered, "I just do this kind of work for the prestige involved." He gave me a strange look and still probably wonders whether I was serious or not. Beyond the mechanical breakdowns and infrequent visitors there is the routine. I let my mind wander off by itself and it promptly starts to count the passing bottles or figure out the ratio of upside-down corks to right-side-up corks. I try experiments alternating hands to see if my thought patterns change, I exercise my feet and legs to insure that somebody will be able to walk me out when and if 5:00 p.m. ever arrives, and I run old movies in my head from any year I like of my own personal history, leaving out the boring parts. In my finest hours I fend off the perils of instant success in any number of areas. Fighting off these hazards tends to exhaust me, and I am truly tired when the last pallet of boxes is finally filled and the machinery silenced.

I walk out into the late afternoon sun and gaze over the long, orderly rows of vines on the surrounding slopes. Every year these gnarled and ancient plants bear their heavy clusters of fruit for man to ferment, age and drink their intoxicating juices as he has for thousands of years.

With my "low-fill" bottle of Chardonnay '81 next to me (one of the perks of working in a winery), I drive home through the stillness in anticipation of joining the rest of mankind in a centuries-old tradition of winebibbing and watching the last rays of sun bid "adieu" to the Valley of the Moon.

Meanwhile, back at the front . . .

While we bottlers are dodging flying glass and wine in the back of the winery, the wine pourers are fending off customers at the front. Wine pouring can be just as hectic as bottling especially on Saturdays during the summer and fall months. Allan, wine pourer at our winery, told me that wine tasters ordinarily behave like perfect ladies and gentlemen through the week, but on weekends they undergo a chemical change and behave more like barbarians. He likened the phenomenon to an event of ancient times, when sane people would suddenly leave families and friends to join the Greek god of wine, Dionysus, and his satyrs in their drunken jaunts through the forests.

In wineries today wine tasters can become just as bizarre by 3:00 on a Saturday afternoon, having hit every

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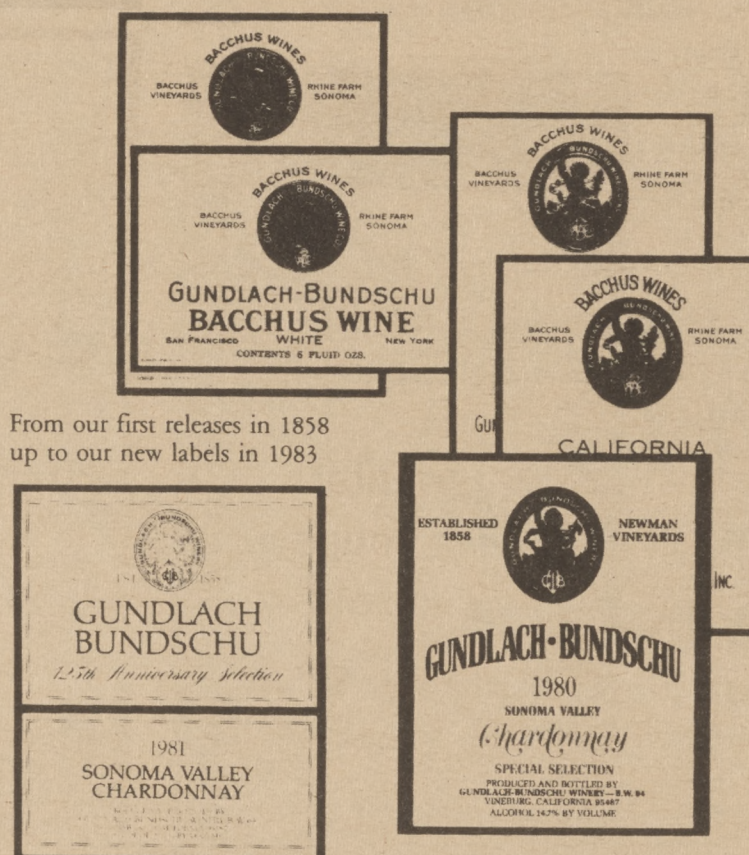
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wine tasting room in the Sonoma Valley. Their palates can no longer distinguish between a Sauvignon Blanc and a Gewurztraminer, and their only concern is to become thoroughly inebriated — as cheaply as possible — before the doors close on the last winery. In fact, the biggest problem for wine pourers is dealing with tasters who innocently started their tour in the morning but by afternoon are bent on complete debauchery, demanding to know why they cannot have 'seconds' and 'thirds'. Exjocks who think they have been slighted may decide to display their muscle-power right in the tasting room. Groups of young rowdies may want to take a little something home from the winery without paying for it. Wine pourers do not find much humor in these situations and, although intoxicated men and women think they are freer and funnier, wine pourers are more likely to consider them obnoxious and hysterical. Much diplomacy is needed on the wine pourer's part to gently steer the bobbing and weaving groups out the door.

Sundays, by comparison, are delightful; wine tasters are wasted, hungover and docile. After dancing all day Saturday to the sound of Pan's magic flute and drinking every new release from one end of Sonoma Valley to the other, tasters are easier to control and less tempted to follow Dionysus and his friends.

When I asked Allan if he could pick out tasters who knew about wine, he said, "Wine pourers can spot a wine connoisseur immediately — those who are in the 'know' do not speak or speak only in the language of wine. Those who know nothing promptly ask for Chablis, whether or not Chablis is listed, or something 'sweet.' They figure they'll be safe sticking with what they know from back home." Surprisingly, there are few wine snobs in tasting rooms; people generally come to learn, not to show off their knowledge. Few customers challenge the expertise of the wine pourers behind the counter. For his part, Allan enjoys answering all questions about wine, whether or not the person is wine-educated, and says that he meets fascinating people from around the world who bring knowledge of wines from other countries. People who want to learn and exchange information help balance out the Saturday revelers.

Certainly, wine has been present since man first held a gourd to his lips some 5,000 years ago, perhaps the only material link we have with our ancestors. Allan feels that wine continues to have a civilizing effect on man, and is unique in that quality. With the help of fermented grape juice, we are elevated to the level of poets and philosophers. Do we reach the same status with the help of beer or martinis? Definitely not, says Allan — only wine gives man an eloquent tongue and new perspective — in moderate amounts, of course!

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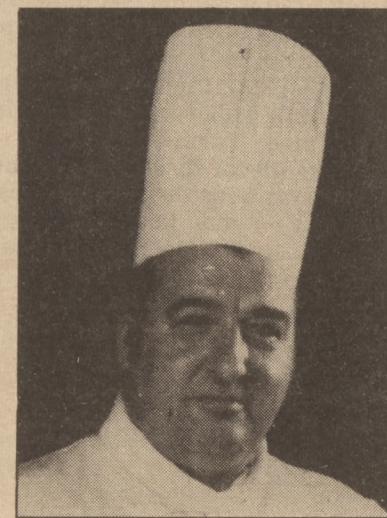
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A rain of champagne

The bubbly boom begins to take hold in Sonoma Valley

BY KAREN KOHS

Perhaps the most romantic of all spirited beverages, by far, is that mysterious, effervescent delight Americans call champagne. Invented as the result of a happy accident in the 16th century; this special wine has become a cultured art; and has since found a home in the wine regions of California, possibly to perfection in the Sonoma Valley appellation.

Although any product made outside the native confines of France's Cham-

mestic taste for bubbly, presently averaging an increase of 25 percent per year, some 1.1 million bottles were laid away last year in this appellation alone, according to figures given by the individual wineries.

The two grape varieties traditionally used in sparkling wine, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, nearly topped tonnage figures county-wide at last year's harvest. As shown in the 1983 Sonoma County Agricultural Commission's report, Chardonnay was



pagne region is technically called sparkling wine (*de rigueur* among purists), it is made pretty much the same way as when Dom Perignon perfected the process that transforms still wine into something scintillating.

Here in the heart of Sonoma Valley's wine country, old wineries and new have made sparkling wine part of their repertoire, joined recently by foreign interests coming from all corners of the globe.

Capitalizing on the increasing do-

second only to Cabernet Sauvignon, with 13,136 tons, and Pinot Noir was number three at 11,404 tons.

Obviously, vintners have made this a "pressing" issue! But where do they find the magic grapes? Many, by far, are drawn to the peaks and lulls of the Sonoma Valley proper, in particular, to one special region in the very south.

LOS CARNEROS: "THE PREMIER REGION"

Toward the end of a warm, dry

summer of '84, a year when Mother Nature was unusually even-tempered, special presses were readied early for their appointed task: the harvest of grapes destined for sparkling wine.

It usually begins sometime in August. All throughout the different regions of the Valley, sugar levels have been rising slowly in the grapes, building toward sweet perfection. For the many varieties of still wine, harvest is maybe weeks, even months, away. In the Los Carneros region, however, the time is ripe for picking.

Champagne grapes are picked when the sugar content is between 16-19 degrees Brix (or percent). This results in a drier still wine, with high acid and no residual sugar, characteristic of champagne, and just right for the transformation process, which involves the addition of sweet substances at two points. (See in this issue *How Champagne Is Made*.)

Nearly all of the sparkling wine producers in Sonoma Valley obtain their grapes from the Los Carneros region, as do some from the Napa Valley, including Domaine Chandon. The reason? Winemakers were unanimous here: Carneros produces the ideal grapes.

"The wine is there," quotes Sebastiani's Jim Carter, vice president of sales and marketing, "The region will be the **THE** place people gravitate to whenever they talk about producing sparkling wine."

Freixenet's winemaker Eileen Crane is equally enthusiastic. "Carneros, where we're locating, has always kind of been considered the premier region for Pinot Noir and Chardonnay," she says. Freixenet will soon be constructing a new winery in Schellville on the western edge of the Sonoma Carneros region.

French tradition dictates the use of these two varieties, and California wineries generally follow. The ratio of one to the other varies greatly, according to vintner preference. It all begins, though, in the gentle contours

of Los Carneros, where skilled hands harvest select clusters, with as little blemish and damage as possible.

From here, the grapes are loaded into smaller than usual containers (to avoid bruising and damage). The delicate cargo is then rushed to points all over Sonoma County, to become part of varying and individual operations that each winery hopes will make its vintage stand out from the rest.

SEBASTIANI: CHAMPAGNE WAS THE FOUNDER'S DREAM

The earliest claim to the Valley's champagne crown was by the Sebastiani family of Sonoma, so hold the people of Sebastiani Vineyards.

"August Sebastiani brought our executive winemaker, Doug Davis, out here over thirty years ago specifically for the making of sparkling wines," recalls Carter. "We thought sparkling wine would be interesting. When Chateau St. Jean made the capital commitment, it swayed our decision."

Sebastiani Vineyards harvests its own grapes and presses them at the winery, but when it comes time to bottle, the product is shipped to Chateau St. Jean's sparkling wine complex at Graton, which Sebastiani leases part-time. The bottles are then returned to Sonoma for their long secondary fermentation and rest phase, then trucked back to Graton to disgorge and label.

The wine itself is pure Pinot Noir, and pure Sebastiani in style. The juice, extracted by an American-made ramrod press (unique to the industry), ferments ten degrees warmer than usual. Winemaker Bill Harper, who oversees the sparkling operation, says this makes for a clearer, better result.

The rest of the process is much as the French would have it, but when it comes time to add the final finish at the end, after disgorging, it is with Italian brandy and dissolved rock candy, personally procured by Sam Sebastiani from the Old Country.

TURN TO PAGE 40

How champagne is made

The modern process of taking still wine and putting bubbles in it is not altogether different from the hand process pioneered by a Benedictine monk in France during the 1600's. The idea is the same: ferment a still wine, then reintroduce yeast, to induce the formation of carbon dioxide bubbles, then somehow trapping that magic in a bottle as a sparkling wine.

As history books recall things, it was discovered, quite by accident, that wine bottled in early spring from barrels overwintered in extreme cold (arresting the natural fermentation)

began to ferment again inside the bottles, producing carbonation. The British were the first to be surprised by the phenomenon when they brought French wine home from Champagne, but it is Dom Perignon of the Abbey of Hautvillers (1639-1715) who is credited with discovering and refining this new delight.

From his early work came the most honored of champagne-making traditions, the Methode Champenoise. Today, it comprises some 300 pages of French law, which many California wineries copy, and which French

transplants such as Piper Sonoma adhere to strictly, but there are, in fact, three methods used today.

Methode Champenoise is used in all premium wines. Primary fermentation, which in California forbids addition of sugar to the highly acidic young harvest, takes place usually in steel tanks at temperatures between 50 and 65 degrees Fahrenheit. The still wines resulting are then racked (carefully drawn off) into clean tanks, filtered, heat and cold stabilized, then presented to the *chef du caves* (winemaker) and his/her wi-

nemakers, for tasting and comparison. This ritual is called the *assemblage*.

From those wines chosen as best suited, a blend is made, called a *cuvée*. The *cuvée* is now ready to be bottled, along with a sugar and yeast mixture called the *liqueur de tirage*. Once the wine goes in, it must remain in these same bottles until it reaches the consumer, if it's to be methode champenoise.

The filled bottles are sealed with a crown cap, inside of which is a sort of

TURN TO PAGE 40



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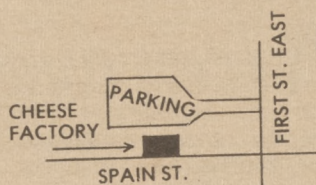
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Champagne

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

Then, the proud product is decked out in a raised, multicolor label and a gold foil bearing the family name. Sebastiani Brut Three-Star has been an award-winner.

Despite the split locations, Sebastiani has no trouble producing 20,000 cases per year for the middle-priced market. Distributed nationwide to what Carter says is "a very targeted market" of fine restaurants and wine shops, Sebastiani's sparkler is said to sell "very, very well."

CHATEAU ST. JEAN: EYE FOR THE BEST

The first Valley winery to build a sparkling wine facility, however, was

Chateau St. Jean, which began as a producer of still wines in 1973, near Kenwood. The plant at Graton was located, the winery presskit says, because it was closer to "carefully selected vineyards" outside of Sonoma Valley that would give the product more "unique expression."

Production of sparkling wines started in 1980, the year after Pete Downs was added to the staff, leaving Winemaker Richard Arrowood to concentrate on still wines. With that crush, Chateau St. Jean set out to make a premium sparkler their own special way.

In a very French methode champe-

noise style, they produce both a regular Brut, 75 percent Pinot Noir and 25 percent Chardonnay, and a Blanc de Blancs of pure Chardonnay. A warm (65) primary fermentation forms the wines becoming the cuvee, which, after inoculation with the second yeast culture, goes to rest for three years.

After this extra finishing, the bottles have their remuage, or riddling (by hand, in racks, the literature details). After disgorging, they are dosed with a combination of cognac, cane sugar, and still wine from the vintage. St. Jean then rests the naked bottles for a few months, "to set the cork", before dressing them out in

gold or silver foils with matching embossed labels, depending on which sparkling wine they are.

Production of the nationally-distributed vin extraordinaire is a grand 50,000 cases annually.

Winery officials maintain that the recent acquisition of the winery, announced in August, by Japanese liquor conglomerate Suntori, Ltd., "will not affect the making of the wines in any way." Sources in the distribution industry, however, speculate that this considerable infusion of foreign wealth could lower prices into the competitive middle range.

How champagne is made

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

plastic thimble, the bidoule. This is to provide a place to concentrate the sediment which accumulates during the latter part of this phase. The bottles are then placed "en tirage", in other words, cellared, where this second yeast culture acts on the sugar to produce the sought-after bubbles. The yeast dies, forming a sediment which settles along the sides of the bottle, adding the yeasty, full-bodied characteristic considered desirable. Left-over sediment is then coaxed into the bidoule, either by old-fashioned hand riddling or mechanically, to be frozen there and popped out at degorgement.

Degorgement (disgorging) means dislodging the sediment plus, done by removing the crown cap and allowing the accumulated pressure (up to 9 times atmospheric pressure) to shoot the frozen material out. Once this is done, some sort of dosage (or sweetening) is added to the completely dry wine, usually brandy or sugared still wine. Seconds later, the bottles are then given their cork, dressed in label, foil, and fancies, and packed for shipping.

THE OTHER two methods are Charmat (bulk) and Carsten Transfer Process. In both of these, the begin-

ning is the same. In Charmat, however, the secondary fermentation is done *en masse* in another tank, then placed into virgin bottles. The Carsten process follows methode Champenoise as far as disgorging, when the bottles are disgorged into a pressurized tank, and the sparkling wine is then re-bottled in clean bottles.

There are also some large bulk plants who do it the lazy way: they merely inject carbon dioxide under pressure into huge vats of cheap jug wine. As David Ryan of Adler Fels puts it, "They're not making sparkling wine, they're making Kool-Aid."

—Karen Kohs



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NEWCOMER IN A BIG WAY: FREIXENET OF SPAIN

When the Catalan-style hacienda rises from the hills near Schellville next March, Freixenet Sonoma Champagne Caves will become the largest producer of sparkling wine in Sonoma County.

At capacity, the subterranean cellars on the grounds will produce 80,000 cases, outstripping the largest competitor by 60 percent. Quantity aside, the centuries-old Spanish wine house plans to carry on its tradition of premium quality in the form of a very different, new product.

The Freixenet heritage comes from San Sadurnia de Noya, in the Catalan region near Barcelona. There, the grapes they use are decidedly Spanish—Macabeo, Xaredo, and Paraldada. The Spanish adapted their longer, milder growing season and special style to a French idea, in what the world knows as Freixenet.

Here in California, under the direction of Eileen Crane (formerly of Domaine Chandon), the effort will be a melding, as she puts it, "of French grapes, French knowledge, California influence, and Spanish heritage." They will blend cuvees of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, both from their vineyards and others in Los Carneros. It will ferment warm, at 65°, then be reinoculated, bottled, and allowed a tirage (rest) of two years. Whether

remuage or mechanical riddling takes place hasn't been decided, but when the Spanish sparkler is disgorged, it will be but lightly touched with a minimal amount of sugar in the dosage, to "maintain natural wine flavors," notes Crane.

Each vintage will be named after a woman of the vineyard family, as is done in Spain, where it has been an honored tradition for centuries. Her name will be inscribed on the labels, and printed at the fore of each foil, a consummate accolade.

Already, even though ground hasn't

been broken for the winery's permanent home, Freixenet has made a limited quantity of Sonoma County product. Winery officials decline to reveal exactly where these first harvests are undergoing transformation, but the label of last year's release, named for honorary winery director Gloria Ferrer, says the product was made in Graton. This year, from, the cellars' first official harvest, 20,000 cases will see release from the secret site.

The bottles are emerald, with foils of burnished gold. Their white labels bear the family crest (Ferrer is Span-

ish "ironmonger", hence a horseshoe and wrought filigree) and are edged in frosted gilt.

MATANZAS CREEK: A ROMANTIC TRADITION BECOMES PART OF THEIR LEGACY

At the opposite end of the Valley, beneath Bennett Mountain, Matanzas Creek Winery rises from what once was a Grade A dairy. Vines first put forth roots here in 1977; each year, as the new vineyards came to bear, the beginnings of a romantic tradition

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Photo by Richard Ammon

FUTURE SITE OF FREIXENET CHAMPAGNE CAVES
Vineyards front Schellville location; winery to be built at base of the hills in distance

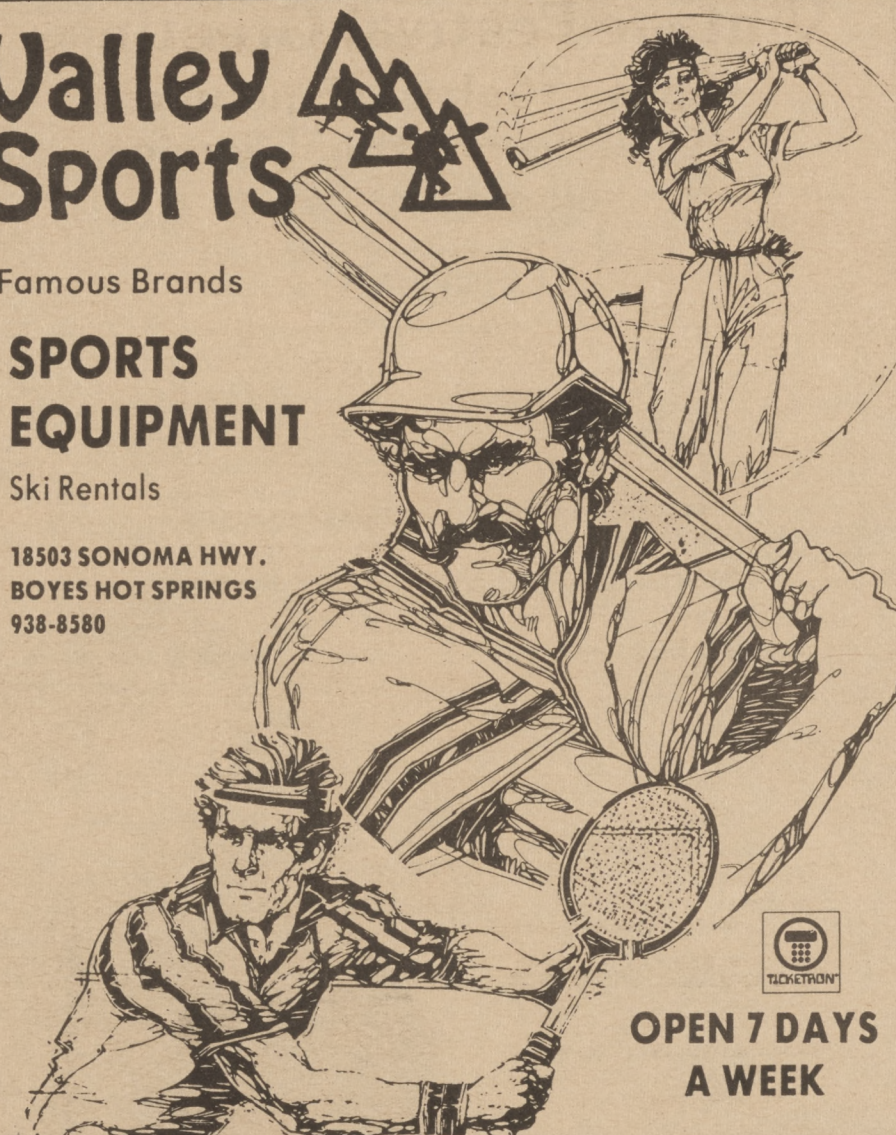
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Champagne

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

came to light, partly by chance.

Vintner and co-owner Sandra Mac Iver explains. "We had these new vineyards coming in, this new Chardonnay, and they were not a big yield. The first crop is always a sparse one. The birds were hitting the grapes pretty heavily, so rather than leave them out there, we picked them early, and we thought we'd try our hand at making champagne."

It seemed to work out well, and from then on, it became tradition to take the maiden harvest of each new

and pop the sediment plug out."

What little of their **VERY** limited production is sold (privately, through their mailing list, or at auction), is disgorged, and corked at Chateau St. Jean, then hand labeled at the winery. Their total production in 1983 was only 1400 bottles.

Matanzas Creek is presently constructing a new winery complex on the property, expected to be completed in February, 1985, but the winery does not plan to expand its sparkling wine production.



KICKING OFF THE CRUSH

Mary Ann Cuneo (l) and brother, Sam J. Sebastiani ceremonially start wine crush with a splash of their Brut Three-Star

Chardonnay vineyard and reserve it for their unique version of the traditional methode champenoise.

At Matanzas Creek, the harvest is done exactly as in France, with specially trained laborers selecting only perfect bunches. Each cluster is carefully trimmed of immature or damaged berries, then gingerly placed in small trays and hand-carried to the press pad. A small bladder press continually cycles out the juice, which then cold-ferments in the outdoor steel tanks. When fermented dry, the wine is inoculated with its secondary yeast mixture, and laid to rest, remaining "on the yeast" for five long years.

Matanzas Creek uses no chemical fining agents or artificial additives. They don't even use a final dose of sweetening. "We disgorge when we serve it," says Sandra. "We riddle it here in our racks, then chill it neck down, and when we serve it, it's just in the plain bottle, with the crown cap. When we open it, we tilt it up halfway

ADLER FELS: MAVERICK ON THE MOUNTAIN

High up the side of hood Mountain, some 1400 feet up a winding road, picturesque Adler Fels perches aquiline amid craggy outcroppings of rock.

Named for its famous Landmark, Adler Fels (which means Eagle Rock in German) takes its Germanic notion further in perhaps the most unusual concepts ever developed in sparkling wine.

It starts with its outspoken, ebullient winemaker. David Ryan doesn't consider himself a winemaker so much as a problem solver. From his background as a design engineer and graphic artist, he learned to draw on his personal resources and creativity, instead of the rules of the game.

It continues to the wine, made from two very German varietals, Gewurtzaminer and Johannisberg Reisling. First of all, it's not picked early, at a low sugar level. He allows the grapes to ripen further, to 23 percent sugar, because he believes it will



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bring out the intensity of the varietals' character.

One of Ryan's biggest criticisms of winemaking traditions has to do with picking grapes early, especially in France, where climate dictates ripeness. "Name me a fruit, any fruit," he challenges, "that something is made from in an unripe condition, and the only thing is French wine."

So, starting out with a more mature harvest at higher sugar, he then ferments down to a residual level, about 4 percent, and then arrests the process with cold stabilization. This is more or less a duplication of the natural process that occurred in the early days of champagne, when winter cold stopped the fermentation of the wines in the caves. Adler Fels uses special



SANDRA MACIVER
Co-owner, Matanzas Creek

tanks with floating tops, eliminating the need for nitrogen gas in the air space, which Ryan claims destroys taste and character.

At bottling, he again departs from accepted practice by using a non-wine yeast, "foreign" yeast as it's called, along with less sugar in the inoculant. Like Matanzas Creek, Adler Fels refrains from using fining agents.

THE SECONDARY fermentation in the bottle is done at a very warm 65°, taking up to six months. The wine is also not left "on the yeast" for extended periods of time, being disgorged of its sediment residue only one year from harvest.

After a total of fourteen months, the small quantities destined for release

TURN TO PAGE 44

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Champagne

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 43

are elegantly dressed in silver foil, into which a folded red ribbon is tucked. This crowns the distinctive etched bottles, with the winery's name and stylized eagle design, in frosted silver right on the glass.

The way Ryan described the end result, it has "a big floral nose", like the still varietal, but with fine, profuse bubbles. The taste he characterizes as "almost a cremant (or creamy) texture, with intense fruit, which many people mistake for being sugar-sweet, but, when they swallow it, it's then

they realize it's not sugar, it's intensely dry."

Adler Fels, because of its size, will never make more than 800 cases of its unusual sparkling wine. The winery, which gives tours by appointment only, is building a small champagne cellar, complete with turrets and arching monastery-style doorways, to house their inventory during tirage and remuage.

Sales recently are through special offerings, auctions, and private customers, making Adler Fels' *Melange a Deux* as elusive on the market as the landmark itself is to sojourners.



Photo by Richard Ammon

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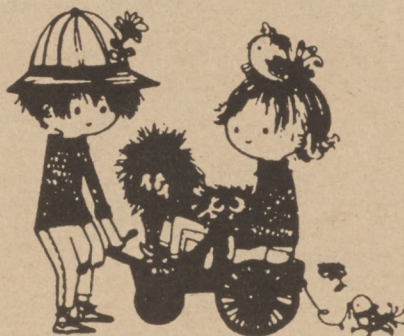


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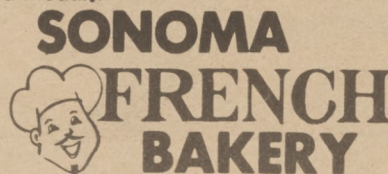


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Sonoma Valley Cellars/Hunter Farms

Producing a new Brut de Noirs sparkling wine

By **LESLIE ERICKSON**
I-T Staff Writer

Put a good product before the public and you have a right to the unabashed pride that wells up every time you see your own name on the label. Sonoma Valley viticulturist Robert Hunter reacts with "somewhat of a knee jerk" when he sees Robert Hunter Brut de Noirs on the shelf.

Robert and Sylvia Hunter created Robert Hunter Brut de Noirs a little more than a year ago when a new contract with Chateau St. Jean Winery left the viticulturists without their usual market for tons of Pinot Noir grown at their Hunter Farms Vineyards. (The Kenwood winery decided to use Pinot Noir grown west of the Redwood Highway.)

Now in their second year with their own label, the Hunters will release 2,800 cases of their own 1981 methode champenoise sparkling wine on Nov. 1. Another 2,400 cases of the 1981 vintage will be released in the spring.

Hunter proudly reports that his label has been received well all over the country in places as different as Denver and Detroit.

"Our thrust this year will not only be in northern and southern California, but outside the state as well," he says.

If this second production year goes

as well as the first did — 1,500 cases of a 1980 vintage were released last year — and a third production year passes as successfully, the Hunters will be ready to build their own winery.

They have already created Sonoma Valley Cellars, a limited partnership of eight, to market the Robert Hunter label. Hunter serves as the general partner and his wife handles the promotional end of the business. Napa vintner Dan Duckhorn is the general manager and marketing arm.

A winery facility does not yet exist, so the actual processing is done at Chateau St. Jean's Graton facility.

When Sonoma Valley Cellars is actually bottling in its own plant, Hunter expects his own acreage to produce about 50 percent of what is needed for a 20,000-case facility.

Ten of those acres were recently planted in Pinot Noir near St. Andrew United Presbyterian Church. Hunter expects a first harvest in that vineyard next year. (Less than 10 percent of the grapes now in the Robert Hunter vintage are grown by Ernst Ophuls in Kenwood.)

Despite his new venture, Hunter did sell some Pinot Blanc to Coturri & Sons Winery this harvest. He also sells much of his Chardonnay crop to Hacienda Wine Cellars and Chateau St. Jean and does not expect the re-

cent sale of the Chateau to affect his "evergreen" contract.

THIS YEAR'S crop of Pinot Noir for the Robert Hunter label was picked at 18 brix; the Pinot Blanc at 19 and the Chardonnay at 20. (Grapes to be sold to other wineries were left on the vine longer.)

Knowing when to pick is just one of the tricks Robert Hunter has learned over the years through viticulture courses at Santa Rosa Junior College and by practical experience.

Reserved yet friendly, Hunter admits to being a "frustrated farmer."

He began his initial 50-acre operation in 1973 in a so-called "banana belt" microclimate off Arnold Drive northeast of Hanna Boys Center while still overseeing Crocker Bank's Agricultural Division. He retired from banking in 1978 to devote his full attention to his grapes.

The land was so ripe — it was once the late Alma Spreckels' racetrack and later an Angus breeding farm — "we thought we wouldn't need fertilizer," Hunter recalls with amusement. "It worked so well that there was too much nitrogen, too many leaves, not enough fruit."

Hunter and former vineyard manager Jerry Quirk (he recently moved to Foppiano Winery) solved the prob-

'I started farming
as an avocation...
now it's my vocation.
My regret is that I
didn't do it
10 years earlier'

lem and went on to create the thriving vineyard.

The annual yield now approaches 200 tons under the careful eyes of Hunter and new vineyard manager Chris Bowen.

"I've been fortunate in having two vineyard managers who believe in the concept of the exercise of excellence," insists Hunter, who enjoys experimenting with different farming methods.

Part of his vineyard is caned on a slant trellis, rather than the more traditional perpendicular cross arm. This, he believes, allows for greater air and sunlight circulation, thereby delivering better nutrients to the vines through extended photosynthesis.

GIVEN ANOTHER chance, he says he'd probably train the vines over seven-foot stakes, rather than six-footers. This method has saved time and worked well in other parts of the vineyard.

"If I had to do it all over again, I'd be more cautious about the type of ground before investing," says Hunter, surveying his lower vineyard, which is apparently none the worse for growing in the sand-and-gravel soil near Sonoma Creek. (The upper vineyard thrives in Huichica clay or loam.)

Hunter has no plans to further expand his acreage, but he's not adverse to one day extending his viticultural practices and control to other vineyards which may contribute to the Robert Hunter label.

"I started farming as an avocation," Hunter muses. "Now it's my vocation. My regret is that I didn't do it 10 years earlier."

"I heard a phrase bandied about that farming is an empirical science," he adds. "I never fully appreciated it."

The younger Hunters certainly do. Son Rob is the assistant winemaker at Groth, a new winery in Napa Valley.



Photo by Leslie Erickson

ROBERT AND SYLVIA HUNTER

He grows Pinot Noir, Pinot Blanc and Chardonnay at his Hunter Farms Vineyards

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Sonoma

Kistler Vineyards

Where the winemaking traditions of Burgundy, France are applied to California wine grapes

By TOM SILBERKLEIT

Yes, winemaking is an art, and there is more to it than just adding a

little yeast to grape juice. Decisions must be made, vines must be nurtured, economics must be considered, and, most important, instincts must

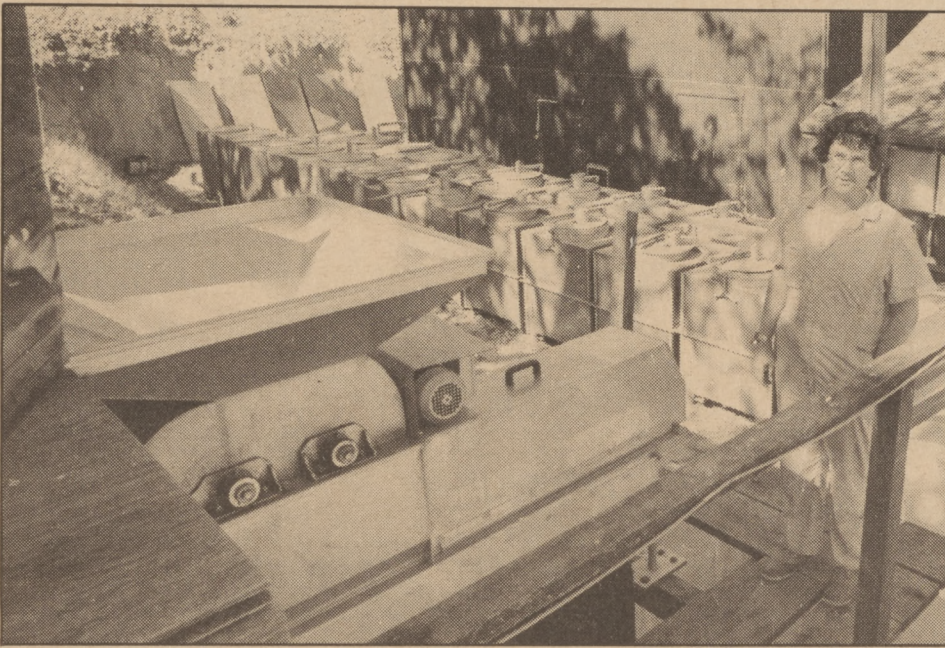


Photo by Richard Ammon

KISTLER CHEMIST MARK BIXLER

Grapes are dumped from elevated crusher (foreground) into portable tanks, shown in background

be followed.

When Steve Kistler and Mark Bixler, a former professor of chemistry at Fresno State University, first started Kistler Vineyards in 1979, they had some very definite ideas on how they wanted to make wine.

"The Winemakers of the Burgundy region of France have centuries of experience behind them, yet no one has really tried to see what those same techniques will do in California with the differences in our fruit..." explained 36 year old winemaker, Steve Kistler from the twilight seclusion of his Sonoma Valley vineyard. "I'm interested in first imitating the best qualities in French wine and then going on from there."

Kistler's goal is to create a "better" Chardonnay. A wine that is compatible with food, moderate in alcohol, rich in complexity, elegant and understated. The best way to do this, he believes, is to follow the French tradition of "less is more." The less you interfere, the better the wine.

"Lots of California wineries are trying to create a difference between their Chardonnay and the other guys..." said Kistler. "Everybody is under pressure from fierce competi-

tion... The smaller wineries want to give their own imprint to their Chardonnay — an imprint that gives their wine a detectable difference."

HIS VINEYARD is a modest operation, producing 6500-7000 cases of wine each year. Approximately 80-85 percent of his 350 acres are planted with Chardonnay grapes — the Cabernet of white wines. Since the winery's vineyard will not reach maturity until next season, they are currently importing fine grapes from neighboring areas.

In making a Chardonnay of exceptional character Kistler must first start out with exceptional grapes. This is why a good deal of his grapes (80 tons this year) come from the near-by apple growing region of Sebastopol, near the Sonoma coast.

"We choose grapes from Sebastopol because they're so good. The chemical composition and the flavor are just right for the way we want to make wine."

According to Kistler, grapes from Sebastopol have a low pH and high acid content which most closely approximates the same chemical com-

TURN TO PAGE 48

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Kistler

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 47

position of grapes found in Burgundy. He speculates that their inherent delicacy may be due to cooler temperatures and fog caused by their close proximity to the ocean.

"If you're a small winery and you're trying to compete, you look for even the smallest difference in your wine," said Kistler, surveying the stillness of his vines. "If you're not willing to do that, you're going to have a hard time selling your wine..."

When the grapes arrive at the winery, Kistler further insures their quality by hand sorting them out of a large wooden hopper — it's the kind of photo tourists to the Wine Country have always dreamed about — two men standing in the hopper, wearing knee-high boots, raking tons of grapes into the crusher by hand. That's in contrast to most larger wineries that prefer the convenience of "V" shaped, stainless steel tanks that convey unsorted grapes mechanically. Hand sorting is a method adopted by Kistler to select grapes that are "the best of the best." It is also a natural extension of his traditional winemaking philosophy.

IN KEEPING true to the French style of winemaking, Kistler has gone so far as to actually redesign his crusher. By allowing it to be stationary, and six feet off the ground, they eliminate the need for electricity to "must pump" the crushed grapes into holding tanks. Instead, the grapes simply fall from the crusher to fill each of the 550 gallon portable tanks as they are rolled beneath it. Usually Kistler Vineyards allows the juice to remain in the tanks, in contact with the skin, overnight, giving the resulting wine extra richness and intensity. When the winery feels it is time, the tanks are then inverted directly into the press. A major advantage of this setup is that if Kistler decides the wine does not need "skin contact," he now has the freedom to crush directly into the press. This type of system allows for as little intervention as possible and is only feasible on a small scale like Kistler's.

After the grapes are pressed away from the skins, the juice is syphoned by gravity alone, through hoses, into the cellar where 250 french oak barrels await filling. The barrels are then inoculated with yeast and fermentation begins. The process of converting the sugar to alcohol takes about two weeks. During this time, the cellar temperature is carefully monitored and kept at about 65 degrees Fahrenheit. When the sugar is gone, and there is nothing left on which the yeast can feed, fermentation is complete. At this point, Kistler Vineyards parts ways with prevailing California winemaking techniques, and advances toward the age-old methods of the French. While many California wineries are busy extracting properties from their wines, Kistler Vineyards continues to promote theirs.

In keeping with the Burgundy style of winemaking they inoculate their wine with a secondary fermentation to promote growth of what is known as "malo-lactic" bacteria. This organism naturally converts the malic acid in wine to the softer lactic acid,

resulting in a rounder, smoother wine. At the same time, it gives the wine a richer, more complex flavor — similar to a nutty or buttery taste. This results in a pleasant difference from the fruitiness most people come to expect from Chardonnay.

According to Kistler, malo-lactic fermentation is a ticklish process. If the vineyard did not promote the reproduction of malo-lactic bacteria, the process, left to occur naturally, could take up to a year. Also, conditions in the wine have to be just right or the bacteria will not survive. It may prosper in only a few barrels for only a short time, or it may not take at all. This is why as soon as the bacteria is discovered growing in one barrel, it must be transferred to others immediately. And strangely enough, bacteria living in barrels since last year can unexpectedly come to life even before the barrel is inoculated.

Another unusual technique practiced at Kistler Vineyards is that of a prolonged "lee's contact" period. This technique allows the wine to stay in contact with the dead yeast at the bottom of the barrel for three to four months, or longer. The decomposing yeast give off valuable nutrients which not only intensify the wine, giving it further complexity, but also help to create an ideal environment for the malo-lactic bacteria to live. Only now, after the malo-lactic fermentation is complete, is the wine left to clarify. By June or July it is electrically pumped, for the first time, upstairs to be bottled.

THE TECHNIQUES practiced at Kistler Vineyard are among the oldest and most traditional of Burgundy techniques. "In France," explained Kistler enthusiastically, "winemaking traditions have been passed down from generation to generation. They can't explain why things happen, yet they know exactly what to do."

Even with Kistler's longing for the traditional, he also knows the importance of intensive monitoring and chemical analysis. In that these procedures are relatively new to California, he maintains an in-house laboratory to observe each process along the way. Without having to rely on outside labs Kistler can keep a maternal eye on his wine day or night through microscopic analysis. Thus, it is easier for the winery to keep the quality of their product as high as possible.

The fact that Kistler winery is a relatively small operation, relying on Kistler and Bixler to do most all the work, is the key to their being able to practice labor intensive techniques. Although expansion of their modest operation might appear tempting, it would defeat the whole intension of Kistler's philosophy.

Today, five years from their first harvest, Kistler's philosophy seems to be working. His vineyard is already producing an excellent Chardonnay containing many of the select qualities he and his partner have been looking for. Perhaps their secret lies in the fact that they aren't just looking to create a good wine, but a wine they can feel good about.



Valley of the Moon Winery, owned and operated by the Parducci family since 1941, is located between Sonoma and Glen Ellen in an area which has been described as one of the finest grape-growing sections in the State of California. Situated on Madrone Road, beside the Sonoma Creek, the historic vineyards have witnessed a colorful past. We welcome you to be our guest at our Winery and Tasting Room, which is open to the public from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily.

Originally a portion of the Agua Caliente Rancho granted by the Mexican government to Lazaro Pena, the land was purchased by General M.G. Vallejo, and later, 640 acres were given to his children's music teacher in exchange for their piano lessons. In 1851, Joseph Hooker took over this portion of the Ranch and planted a vineyard, using Indian or Chinese labor. He was also appointed road-overseer for Sonoma County and ran for the State Assembly. However, at the outbreak of the Civil War, he sold his property and left Sonoma for the East. There he gained fame as "Fighting Joe Hooker" of the Union Army.

In 1876, under the ownership of George Whitman, the vineyard produced 50,000 gallons of wine and 2,000 gallons of brandy. Later, he deeded a portion of the property to the Sonoma and Santa Rosa Railroad for right-of-way for a track to connect Sonoma and Glen Ellen. A station was constructed at the Whitman's for passengers and freight. People, wine and produce could go from this station all the way to San Francisco with a few connections.

Eli T. Sheppard, former American consul to Tientsin, China and later an advisor in International Law to the Japanese Emperor, bought the property in 1883 and named it Madrone Vineyards. He added French vines to the vineyard and was written up in several books of that time as one of the growers whose names are almost as well known as the wines of Sonoma themselves. He is also recorded as one of the winemakers of the Sonoma Valley. Because of poor health, he sold the vineyard to United States Senator George Hearst and retired to San Francisco in 1888.

Senator Hearst became well known for the fine wines that were produced from his Sonoma vineyard. He added Medoc and Gironda grapes to the vineyard and used two stone wine cellars that together could hold 244,000 gallons of wine. His vineyard was described as one of the finest in the State, and he proudly served his own wines and brandy to his guests in Washington, D.C. Unfortunately, after Senator Hearst's death, the vineyards and winery were sold and they changed hands many times until 1922.

In 1922, Louis Engelberg purchased the Madrone Vineyards. He operated the vineyards through the prohibition and depression years. Engelberg sold the grapes from the vineyards to other wineries and maintained the high quality expected from Madrone Vineyards.

When Enrico Parducci purchased Madrone Vineyards in 1941, the winery had fallen into disuse. However, he was able to start production in 1942, producing quality bulk wines. In 1974, under the management of Harry Parducci, Enrico's son, Valley of the Moon Winery introduced their 100% Sonoma Valley varietals. These wines are made with grapes from their own vineyards under the supervision of Harry and Rheda Parducci and sons Harry Jr. and Gerard.

The Parducci family hopes you enjoy your visit to the historic landmarks of the Sonoma Valley and especially your visit to the Valley of the Moon Winery.

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The 'eagle' in Sam Sebastiani

A determination to soar and produce the best premium wines possible

By HERBERT CERWIN

Sam Sebastiani was in his late twenties when we had lunch together. There was a youthful drive about him and determination in his eyes.

"We need to improve the image of the winery and we need someone to help us," he said.

Our home and our vineyard is in Sonoma, but my public relations office is in San Francisco. Over the years we have represented many large corporations.

My first meeting with Sam that day

was some 13 years ago. Sebastiani Vineyards was small, not well known and mostly produced jug wines.

Over a bottle of Sebastiani Barbera, Sam and I talked. There was enthusiasm in his voice.

"My main ambition is to produce fine wines — great wines if possible," he said. Then he added, "I know it's going to take time."

HE TOOK ME for a tour of the winery, and later I learned that without help, Sam had designed and installed

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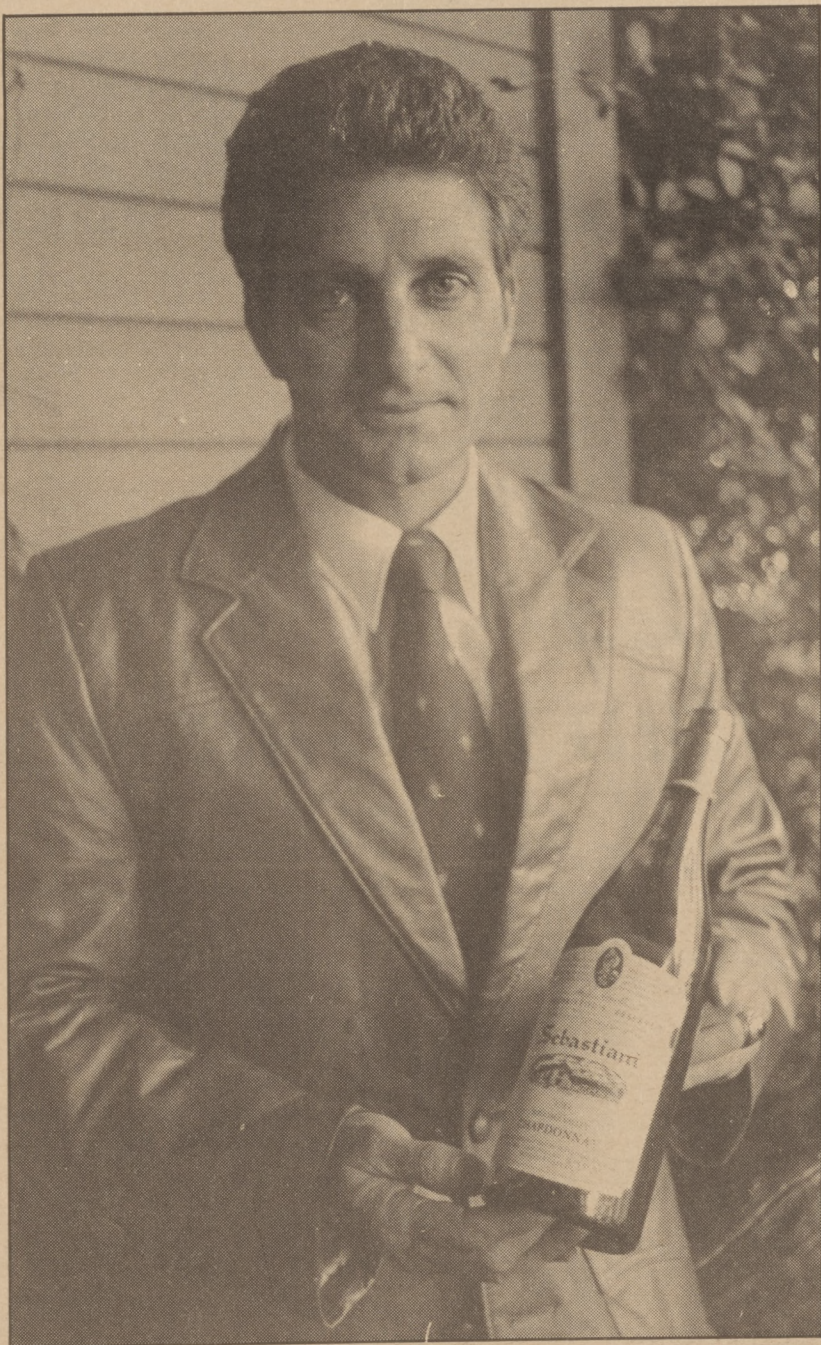


Photo by John Lynch

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Sebastiani

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 49

the tasting room counter, the top of which is covered with a clear plastic casting resin. And, he had begun to create some atmosphere about the winery and hired gifted craftsman Earle Brown to start carving the wine barrels.

In one corner of the winery there was a guest book with names and addresses of winery visitors.

"What do you do with all those names?" I asked.

"Not much," he said.

A week later, when we met again, I suggested to Sam that he might con-

sider writing a winery newsletter to be mailed to the visitors.

At first his father, August, turned down the idea, but later agreed. Sam wrote the newsletter. It went out to about 1000 visitors. It was a well-written, instructive letter about wines. The newsletter soon won praise and the list of people who requested to be put on the mailing list, grew and grew.

Today the Sebastiani newsletter is considered the best produced by any winery and it now is mailed to over 100,000 readers.

ABOUT A YEAR LATER, August and Sam decided to put varietal wines

into jugs — an innovation in the wine industry.

We held a media conference in San Francisco. Bob Strand of the United Press was so impressed that the article he wrote went to over a thousand newspapers. Then began inquiries and articles by wine writers.

Sebastiani Vineyards was in the news, and its sales began to grow, perhaps even too rapidly. Sam, by nature, is shy and meticulous and yet despite that shyness, he wants — demands — to have things done quickly and well. By nature he is a perfectionist — it just has to be the best.

But unconsciously, he wants to soar like an eagle, going fast and reaching great heights.

And so the eagle to Sam has become a bird that has survived and flown successfully in the direction it chose.

The eagle is our national symbol and so the eagle is close to Sam. His home is named the Eagle Ridge Ranch. He has eagle figures inside and outside. He has an eagle statue in his office and his stationary logo is an eagle, and recently the newest Sebastiani vineyard was named: The Eagle Vineyard.

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10. Mary's Combination (Salsami, Peppers, Cooked Salsami, Sausage, Mushrooms, No Substitutions.)	7.45	8.10	10.10	11.20
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Recently Sam and his wife, Vicki, visited the small town in Italy where Sam's grandfather was born. "We wanted to know more about our heritage. To search and find one's heritage is important."

With the guidance of Vicki, Sam has learned the pleasures of creating and enjoying fine cuisine.

The eagle soars high over California, over the nation, and so have Sebastiani wines.

(—Editor's note:

The writer, Herbert Cerwin, is one of San Francisco's top public relations personalities, and lives much of the time at his vineyard ranch home, a few miles east of Sonoma Plaza. He has been associated with Sebastiani as a public relations consultant for the past 13 years.)



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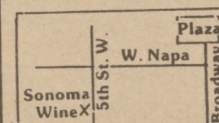


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Wine consumption and state of the wine industry

- Rich Kunde, county growers president p. 52
- The wine marketing order p. 53
- Understanding wine: elegant restraint p. 55
- The valley vintners' association p. 56-58

Rich Kunde

Owner of Sonoma Grapevines, Inc. and head of county growers' association, he feels success in the wine industry lies in broadening market base and getting more people to acquire a taste for wine

By TERESA MARIANI
I-T Staff Writer

Even though Richard Kunde's Sonoma Grapevines, Inc. is located on the far side of Santa Rosa, his business is firmly rooted in Kenwood.

Kunde grows and sells certified root and topstock for vine-grafting. His firm also sells interior foliage and seasonal color plants such as poinsettias, but his rootstock, topstock and certified benchgrafts make up 75 percent of his business.

The vine expert has other roots in the Sonoma Valley as well. He was raised at the Kunde family's Wildwood Vineyards near Kenwood, which his brothers now run, and he still makes his home at Wildwood.

In a new move for the grape-growing family, all three brothers produce top and rootstock in the Valley for their Sonoma Rootstocks business.

Sonoma Grapevines was founded in 1972; Kunde joined the firm in 1976 ("I came here on April Fools day, 1976," he laughed), originally holding two percent of the stock. He gradually bought out the other stockholders, and succeeded in buying out the last stockholder last year.

For the U.C. Davis grad born and raised with the grape business, the grafting business seemed like a natural.

The Grapevines nursery produces rootstock resistant to Phylloxera, an aphid-like insect which preys on grapevine roots. The little parasite virtually destroyed all vineyards in the area during the 1870s, when it was first found in the state.

THE NURSERY also produces rootstock resistant to other specific problems and suited to different soils. Sonoma Grapevines will graft the rootstock onto whatever grape variety customers request, including table-grape varieties.

Workers graft the vines in January and March, which can then be sold as green grafted grapevines, and planted in May.

The company takes rootstocks not sold and hauls them down to its grow-

ing fields south of Fresno, where they grow for a year, are then dug, and brought back as dormant vines. These are then grafted "on the bench" to topstock varieties.

Benchgrafts are more expensive than green-grafts, which can add up, figuring there are probably 450 vines to every acre of vineyard, Kunde admitted.

But the benchgrafted vines are usually more hardy. "If you plant a fieldgraft, there are always some losses. A dormant benchgraft — if there's losses, we've already taken them in the nursery," he explained.

Nursery specialists will also graft topstock through a process called T-budding. By cutting a 't' into the vine bark and inserting a bud of a new grape variety, "you can change variety of a whole vineyard in a year," Kunde explained.

THE BUSINESS is doing well, despite the often-fluctuating market for wine grapes. Sonoma Grapevines grafted over 35,000 topstock buds last year, and did a total of 779,733 grafts so far in 1984. Of these, only 25,648 were table grape varieties; the rest were wine varieties.

THE MAJORITY OF Kunde's customers are from Sonoma, Napa and Mendocino counties, though the company has supplied vines to areas as far away as Washington, Oregon, Canada, Missouri, and even Japan.

Grafts did drop for the company in 1983, but are beginning a climb back, Kunde said. He credits the increased demand for sparkling wine for the increase in grafts this year, as well as with providing a shot in the arm for grape growers and vintners.

"If it wasn't for the big increase and demand in sparkling wines, I'm sure we wouldn't have the business we have," Kunde stressed.

Kunde said 60 percent of the company's grafts last year were of varieties used in producing sparkling wines — Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc, Colom-



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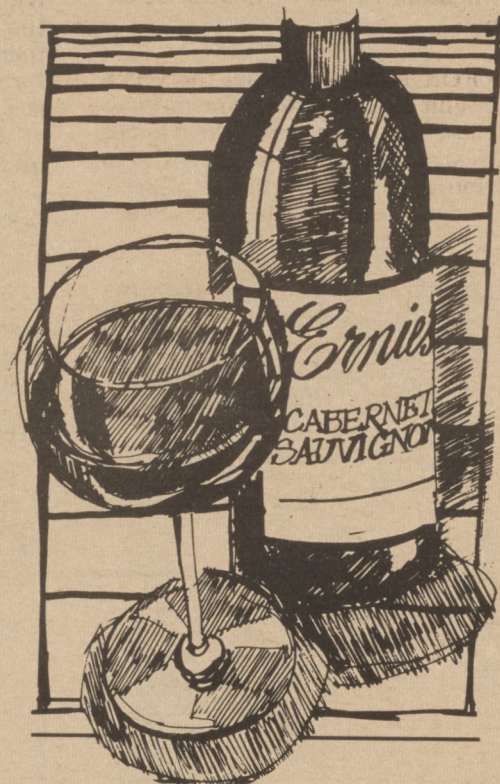
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Photo by Teresa Mariani

VITICULTURIST RICH KUNDE**The demand for sparkling wine grapes has helped business**

bard, Pinot Noir, and a new variety, Meunier.

Kunde had to import the Meunier from the Champagne region of France. "To my knowledge, we're the only nursery that's grafted it," he added. Whether or not the variety does well in the North Coast region remains to be seen. "There's very little known about it," the viticulturist explained.

AS FOR THE notion that there is a grape glut in California, especially in the North Coast region, "the figures are misleading," said Kunde, who in addition to his Grapevines business, he is the president of the Sonoma County Grape Growers Association.

"Sonoma, Napa, and Mendocino combined reflect only 10 percent of the market — 90 percent, the bulk of the wine grapes grown, represents the (central) valley," Kunde explained.

"But we are 'the wine country.' We generate more headlines because we're the premium segment — and so we've managed to come through the

recession just fine," he added.

Most of the surplus grape acreage — producing grapes which will not sell well — is in the central valley, Kunde said. "It appears the wine industry in this region has bucked the trend."

Actually, there is no 'grape glut,' Kunde said; only the restrictions on the American industry and government subsidised competition from the foreign wine industry make it appear so.

"If this was not occurring at the moment, the amount of vineyards planted would equal our demand," he said, adding: "the foreign wine is taking a part of our market."

THE SOLUTION to the doldrum market for American grape growers, Kunde is hoping, is the new marketing order voted in by the state grape growers and vintners associations.

Grape growers and vintners will be "taxing" themselves over the next

TURN TO PAGE 55

About the new state marketing order

By **JACKIE KRAMER**
I-T Staff Writer

California vineyard owners and winemakers agreed to pay up to \$13 million annually for a state-sponsored marketing order that would promote California wines, it was announced in late August. The order followed months of dispute, lawsuits and delays.

Over 134 vintners, out of 234 wineries eligible to vote, approved the measure, representing 73.7 percent of winegrapes crushed.

A slimmer margin of growers ap-

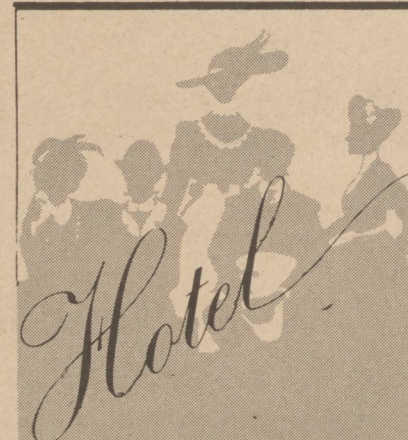
proved the marketing order in a different type of election. Nearly 58 percent of growers voted, and of those, 54.5 percent approved the order, only 31.6 percent of the state's total growers. These growers, however, represent 66.8 percent of the crop of those who voted.

Votes were counted on August 15. Voting deadline had been extended from the initial August 3 deadline so that more growers and vintners would have time to submit their ballots.

Although some authorities felt that

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Kunde

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 53

three years, kicking in one percent each of the profits from all grapes crushed in order to finance a marketing organization.

That could amount to some \$6 million available to start the marketing program, designed to promote wine consumption at home and abroad — not to promote consumption of a specific wine type or label.

The measure, however, is being

fought tooth and nail by big liquor importers and American hard liquor corporations.

"The problem now is that (in wine marketing) they're saying 'brand X is better than brand Y. It's just trying to steal customers away from each other,'" he explained.

This tactic has to go, Kunde said. It's time to increase and broaden the market base — in short, to get more Americans to acquire a taste for fine wines.

Marketing order

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 53

the marketing order would fall just short of the number of growers needed to ratify the program, the necessary votes were achieved by deadline.

The marketing order became effective August 21, after Department of Agriculture officials officially appointed 36 members of the board, equally split between vintners and growers.

THE NEW marketing order was opposed by several large beverage concerns who import foreign wines or run distilleries as well as own California wineries.

The present plan is to assess growers and wineries certain sums based on production to a maximum of one percent, with the money used to promote a special program to let people

know about California wines.

Foreign wines have taken an increasing share of the U.S. market, nearly 25 percent in the first four months of 1984.

Although many wine industry experts laud the passage of the new marketing order, Sonoma Valley had already created such an alliance of growers and vintners.

The Sonoma Valley Vintners' Association, with president Steve MacRostie at the helm this year, is an organization formed to aid in the promotion of the world class wines of the valley.

This group has established a working partnership that has resulted in the raising of funds to hire a public relations staffer to aid in this promotion, as well as funding the erection of signs at the north and south entrances to the valley alerting visitors to the historic wine country they are visiting.

Understanding wine: elegant restraint

By RICHARD PAUL HINKLE

The sorry fact that Americans do not comprehend wine is a theme brought to my attention more times than I care to think about. "Booze is bad," pontificates one. "It's too sour," gripes another. "Should I like Chateau Joe's Cabernet more than Chateau Frank's?" fearfully queries yet a third.

Each of these questions, in its turn, points to a basic problem of understanding. One at a time.

Booze is bad. Out of control, alcohol is one of the major problems of our time. Maturely used, it is nature's own tranquilizer. While wine clearly contains alcohol, wine is not an "alcoholic beverage." The distinction, for me, is that an alcoholic (or social) beverage is something drunk **just to be drinking**. Wine may make you a bit more sociable, but its natural place is at table, where it offers a touch of elegance to congenial company and complementary food. I favor the Russian proverb: "Drink a glass of wine after the soup and steal a ruble from the doctor."

Which points to the essential mis-

reading of wine in America: Wine is a food, not an alcoholic drink. It should be as much a part of the meal as bread, meat, or vegetable — all of which come from the earth. You see, wine is, at base, an agricultural product; what we are talking about is nothing more sophisticated than ripe grapes whose juice has been allowed to ferment.

WHAT MYSTIFIES me even more are the religious sanctions against wine. The Bible is rife with references to wine — wine is mentioned some 147 times, I am told — and not once are we told not to drink wine. There are several admonitions against drinking bad wine and cautions against drinking too much wine. Ironically, wine is the beverage of **moderation**, as the essence of its existence places it **with** the meal. Wine is not a recreational beverage.

It's too sour. I shudder to consider the enormity of the number of Americans whose first taste of wine was a two year old Cabernet Sauvignon so tart, tannic, and tough as to blister the paint off an automobile. That's not

TURN TO PAGE 56



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Understanding wine

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 55

what wine is all about. An honorary uncle's invitation to dinner came with the request that I not bring any "sour" red wines. So I brought a Cabernet Sauvignon that had seen better than a dozen New Years' celebrations. (Wines, you know, celebrate their birthdays on New Year's Day.) All of sudden "Uncle" Bud came to understand what red wine was all about.

Should I like Chateau Joe's Cabernet more than Chateau Frank's? A question thrown (tossed, handed) us "experts" (connoisseurs, tasters) in-

cessantly. I (we) cannot tell you, or anyone else, what your palate is. If you ask me if Beethoven was a better composer than Brahms, all I can offer is my own opinion based upon my ears. (Symphonies turn my ear, so I prefer Beethoven, though Brahms' First Symphony is an ineffable joy.)

Perhaps a couple of examples will better serve. Many months ago I was participating in a tasting of Petite Sirahs in Ukiah. After the tasting was complete, one gentleman walked over to the person tabulating the scores given by the tasters and asked, "Which was the best wine?" I turned to him and countered, "Which one did

you like best?" He consulted his card and said, "Number three." "Then that was the best wine," I said. It took less than a moment for him to catch my drift, at which time he thanked me for giving him something that he had never considered his own — his palate.

More recently, at a wine appreciation class I was giving in San Francisco, a woman was bemoaning the fact that she had preferred a three dollar Zinfandel to a ten dollar Cabernet — yet another example of someone denying her own perfectly good palate. She was quietly counseled to relish the fact that the wine she liked

so much had turned out to be a delightful bargain. How horrible it would be to have Ch. Lafite taste on a "red table wine" budget.

Only five countries produce more wine than the United States, but per capita consumption is higher in nearly three dozen. Until we begin to understand wine as food, as something that occasionally needs time to reach maturity, and as something that we are free to accept or reject by our own judgments — until that time we will never be comfortable with this wonderful and simple food beverage that instructs so well in elegant restraint. More's the pity. ●

State of the wine industry

Some cause for concern, but vintners president is optimistic

JACKIE KRAMER
I-T Staff Writer

If you're involved in the wine industry, it's getting a little harder these days to keep a cheerful smile and a sunny outlook.

For starters, there is a definite glut of grapes, prices are leveling out and even dropping in some varieties, foreign competition is stiff, and the market for wine is not increasing.

According to Sonoma Valley Vintners' Association president Steve MacRostie, "not only do we have a lot of tonnage unsold in the valley, but

looking at acreage figures, there's a lot of non-producing acreage (young vines that haven't yet begun to bear fruit) in Sonoma County, and also statewide.

"This casts a rather alarming note," MacRostie said.

The current picture shows a soft market for wine industry professionals. MacRostie noted that since the recession, there hasn't been, broadly speaking, a very large increase in the wine market.

California wine shipments to any market at this time are not growing.

"It's a flat situation," explained the Association president.

AS FOR foreign competition, "it's getting harder to sell our product at a profitable price," MacRostie continued. "There's a lot of pressure on us to keep our prices low."

Foreign competition is making an impact on the industry as a whole, although the northeast and east coast sections of the U.S. are affected more strongly than is California.

On a brighter note, MacRostie feels that with the use of strong marketing

efforts, the future looks much rosier.

"I think the industry will continue to grow. Now there are some difficulties in preserving grape-growing as a viable enterprise, and certainly there will be subdivision pressures on us to sell our land for housing.

"If we can overcome all this, we will grow and continue to thrive. We have the quality and dedication here that it takes to make this industry very solid.

"Now we must see the grower survive. If he does, winemaking will prosper as an industry." ●



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Valley Vintners' Association

With a membership now of 22 wineries
their goal is to promote Sonoma Valley wines

By JACKIE KRAMER
I-T Staff Writer

Founded in 1975, the Sonoma Valley Vintners' Association has grown into a successful alliance of grape growers and wineries working together to promote the wines of Sonoma Valley.

This unique organization has grown from a membership of only six wineries to its present 22.

Heading the organization during the current year is Steve MacRostie, who took office as president in March from outgoing president Jim Bundschu. MacRostie has been winemaker at Hacienda Wine Cellars for the past nine years.

Other officers include vice-president Walter Dreyer of Grand Cru, Jan Blasi of Hacienda, secretary and Harry Parducci, Sr. of Valley of the Moon Winery, treasurer. Director for the grape growers is Angelo San Giacomo.

"We began nine years ago as a non-profit agency comprised of grape growers and vintners interested in pooling resources to buy supplies, and

also working to establish a Sonoma appellation for our wines.

"THIS VITICULTURE area has now been established by the government. We were one of the first to get that designation," MacRostie commented with pride.

"Now, our goals are evolving into doing a generic promotion of the valley and its wines. That's our focus now, and it's becoming ever more apparent that we need to do this."

The association has the support of the valley's grape growers, "and we're very proud of the fact that the growers and wineries are allied in the same effort with common goals, achieved with no bickering.

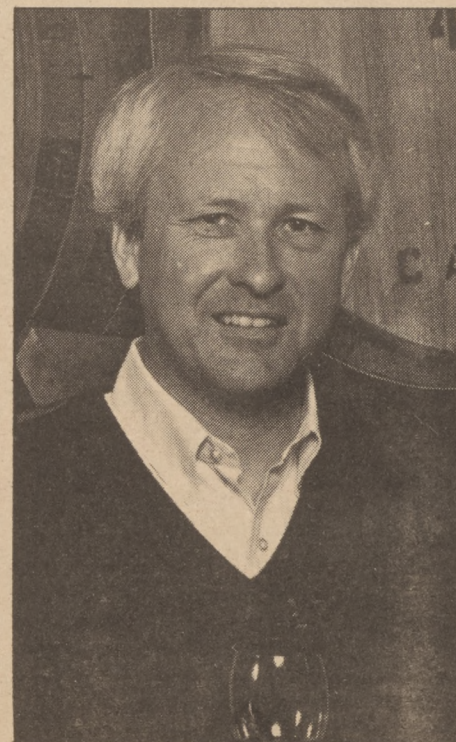
"We're lucky to have that situation here, because it's not the case everywhere."

With money the association has raised, two signs have been erected at the north and south entrances to the valley. In addition, other funds will be used to hire a part-time public relations person to carry out promotion of

Sonoma Valley as a premier wine area in the United States.

"We want to create more awareness of Sonoma wines and feel there's not a moment to lose.

"We want to make Sonoma Valley a household word. Our wines are world class, and we want the world to know it," MacRostie concluded.



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CARMENET VINEYARD — Located at 1700 Moon Mountain dr. For more information, phone 996-5870.

CHATEAU ST. JEAN — Located at 8555 Sonoma hwy. in Kenwood. Tasting room open daily 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tours from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Picnic area provided. Phone 833-4134.

GLEN ELLEN WINERY — Located at 1883 London Ranch rd., Glen Ellen. Tasting room open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tours for large groups by appointment only. Phone 996-1066.

GRAND CRU VINEYARDS — Located at 2 Vineyard ln., Glen Ellen, behind Dunbar School. Take Hwy. 12 north. Turn left on Arnold dr. to go towards Glen Ellen. Make a quick right-hand turn on to Dunbar rd. Continue on Dunbar rd. to Dunbar School. Left-hand turn on to Vineyard ln. behind school. Tasting room open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Self-guided tours. Picnic area. Phone 996-8100.

GUNDLACH-BUNDSCHU WINERY — Located at 3775 Thornsberry rd., Sonoma. Take Napa st. out of downtown Sonoma heading east. Make a left turn on to Old Winery rd., then a right to Lovall Valley rd. and proceed to Thornsberry rd. (a right-hand turn). Tasting room open daily 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Picnic area. Phone 938-5277.

H. COTURRI & SONS — Located in Glen Ellen. Phone 996-6247 or write: P.O. Box 396, Glen Ellen 95442.

HANZELL VINEYARDS — Visitors by appointment only. No tasting. Phone 996-3860 or 996-0431.

HACIENDA WINE CELLARS — Located at 1000 Vineyard ln., Sonoma. Take Napa st. east out of Sonoma to Seventh st. east. Turn left. Take Seventh st. to Castle rd., turn right. Proceed to Vineyard ln. Tasting room open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Picturesque picnic area-wine garden. Phone 938-3220.

HAYWOOD WINERY — Located at 18701 Gehricke rd., just north of the town of Sonoma. Future public tasting and retail sales planned. Phone 996-4298.

KENWOOD VINEYARDS — Located at 9592 Sonoma hwy. near the intersection of Warm Springs rd., in Kenwood. Tasting room open daily from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. except major holidays. Tours by appointment only. Call 833-5891.

KISTLER VINEYARDS — Located at 2995 Nelligan rd., Glen Ellen. No tasting or tours. For more information, write: 2995 Nelligan rd., Glen Ellen 95442.

LAUREL GLEN VINEYARD — Located at 6611 Sonoma Mountain rd., Santa Rosa. Phone 526-3914 for more information.

MATANZAS CREEK WINERY — Located at 6097 Bennett Valley rd. in Bennett Valley between Kenwood and Santa Rosa. Tours by appointment only. Phone 542-8242.

RAVENSWOOD WINERY — Located at 21415 Broadway, Sonoma. Tours and tastings by appointment only. Phone 938-1960.

RICHARDSON VINEYARDS — Located in Schellville. No tastings or tours. Contact local liquor store or wine shop proprietors for information about availability of Richardson wines.

SEBASTIANI VINEYARDS — Located at 388 Fourth st. east in Sonoma, one mile east of the Plaza. Take Napa st. to Fourth st. east and turn left. Tasting room open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tours from 10 a.m. to 4:20 p.m. daily. Visitors urged to get there early on weekends. Picnic area included. Phone 938-5532.

SONOMA VALLEY CELLARS (Hunter Farms) — At 15655 Arnold dr., Sonoma. For more information, phone 996-4257.

ST. FRANCIS VINEYARDS — Located at 8540 Sonoma hwy. in Kenwood directly across from Chateau St. Jean Vineyards and Winery. Tasting room open daily 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Phone 833-4666. Tours by appointment only.

VALLEY OF THE MOON WINERY — Located at 777 Madrone rd. in Glen Ellen. Take Hwy. 12 north out of Boyes Hot Springs to Madrone rd. Turn left. Tasting room open daily except Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Phone 996-6941.

Buy a Festival poster

For the first time, the Valley of the Moon Vintage Festival will be selling a poster to commemorate its popular annual event. The poster is a reproduction of a watercolor by local artist Peggy Mackenzie Johnson.

Ms. Mackenzie Johnson has painted a large cluster of grapes overhanging a typical Sonoma Valley scene. The festival's name and date border the artwork.

The Vintage Festival Board hopes that this will be the first poster in a series of posters to be published each year, depicting life in and scenes of the Valley of the Moon. The poster is designed so that a standard 18" x 24" frame may be used to frame the entire poster. Alternatively, the poster can be trimmed so that the festival name and date are removed.

The original watercolor, on which the poster is based, has been framed courtesy of Rick MacKinzie of Thomas-MacKinzie Framing and will be auctioned off at the Vintage Festival Ball on Saturday, Sept. 29. Ms. Mackenzie Johnson will also be present at the Ball, where she will sign a limited number of posters. For those who wish to view the painting prior to the auction, it will be on display in the week before the festival at Fine Line Gallery, 125 E. Napa st., and at the Patrons' Wine Tasting to be held on Friday, Sept. 28.

Peggy Mackenzie Johnson has been living in the Sonoma Valley for six years with her husband, Jere Johnson, a local builder, and her six year old son, Alex. She studied art at the Academy of Art College in San Francisco, graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Fine Art and Illustration. Ms. Mackenzie Johnson works as a free-lance designer and illustrator. She designs logos, business cards, brochures, album covers, newsletters, signs and illustrations for advertising. She enjoys painting and has used her talent in watercolor to create posters and greeting cards. She is also working on a series of watercolor portraits, which she hopes to exhibit soon. Peggy currently shares the top of an old Victorian at 752 Broadway with Arcus Publishing Co. As their in-house artist, she is doing the preliminary sketches for illustrations of two new books.

Posters can be purchased for \$5 a piece during the festival at the Vintage Festival Booth and at the Ball. Posters may also be purchased in advance of the festival at Fine Line Gallery, Bear Flag Realty (515 E. First st.), and at Mission Sonoma Realtors (9 E. Napa st.).



Photo by John Lynch

PEGGY MACKENZIE JOHNSON
She created first Vintage Festival poster

Best wishes for a successful
Vintage Festival



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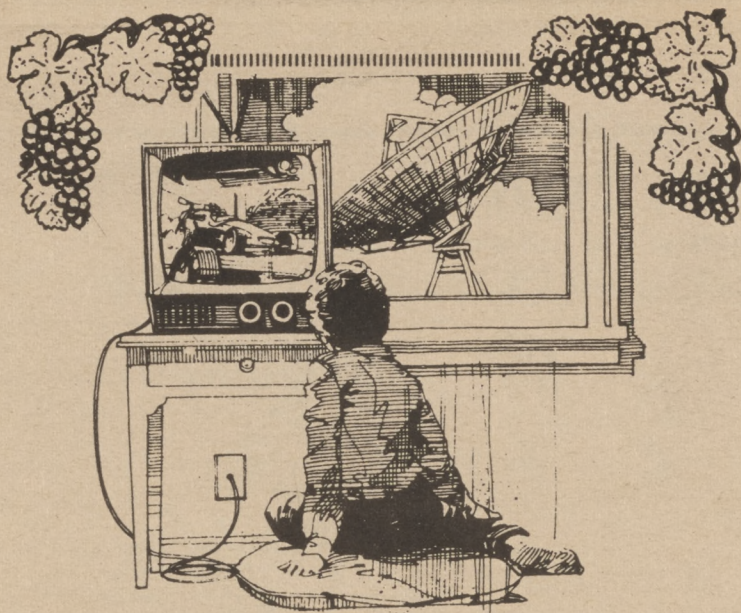
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Jessandra

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

way for vineyards began in July 1983. It took a 10 man crew and three months to finish the project. In April Coturri planted the vines, mostly Cabernet Sauvignon, along with some Semillon. The acreages are in roots-tock now and will be budded over this fall.

Another 40 acres of vineyards are in the planning stages.

Also in the works is one of Coturri's brainstorm—a sophisticated, prototype computer system to monitor the vineyards, being designed by friends of his who are sound engineers for The Grateful Dead. The computer system, among other things, can activate a sprinkler system by merely pushing buttons on a telephone, measure soil moisture and put out an alert in the event a pipe breaks. "Maybe it'll put out a little Dead music out in the vineyards too," jests the scruffy Coturri.

A FEW YEARS ago, the Kamens were driving through the western U.S., looking for that ideal new home, and after winding their way through several states, came across the Napa-Sonoma valleys. They liked what they saw. "I can live here," Joya told her husband. "Too expensive," Kamen said. Joya persisted, and Robert is glad that she did.

"We fell in love with it," he says, remembering the first time they, with the help of some friends who live in the area, discovered the property here. "We've fallen in love with Sonoma Valley and plan to make it out home." He plans to continue his film writing career after he moves here, and is considering getting into producing films as well.

In 1981 Kamen purchased the 300 acre site at a cost of about \$1700 an acre. The success of "Taps" and "The Karate Kid" have helped make such an investment possible. "Taps" grossed around \$60 million. After that, he wrote the not so successful film "Split Image" ("It opened and closed quickly...it was the distributor's fault," he states), but rebounded with a hit in "The Karate Kid" which has topped the \$60 million mark and continues to do well on its first run.

So successful is "The Karate Kid" (produced by Jerry Weintraub, directed by John G. Avildsen) that a sequel is already in the works. Kamen in fact recently returned from Okinawa to do research for the sequel, the filming for which is scheduled to get underway in the spring. In the meantime "Karate Kid" was selected for this year's prestigious French Film Festival.

AN ANTHROPOLOGIST prior to becoming a film writer in 1979, Kamen received his Bachelor's degree from New York University and earned a Doctorate at University of Pennsylvania. For his dissertation he wrote about three young men and their adventures along the Khyber Pass between Afghanistan and West Pakistan. A friend liked it, and encouraged him to write a novel based on his dissertation. Eventually it was



Photo by John Lynch

THE VOLCANIC HILLSIDE DESERTS OF JESSANDRA
Vineyardist Phil Coturri had his work cut out for him creating this vineyard

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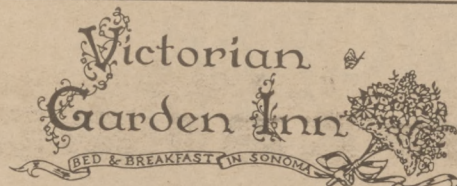
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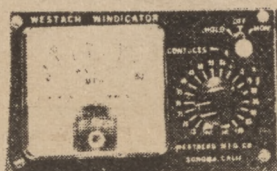
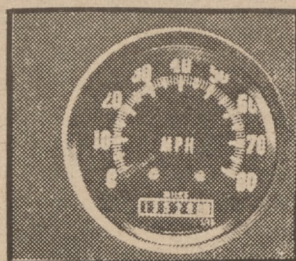
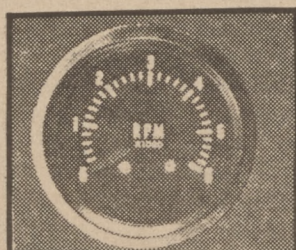
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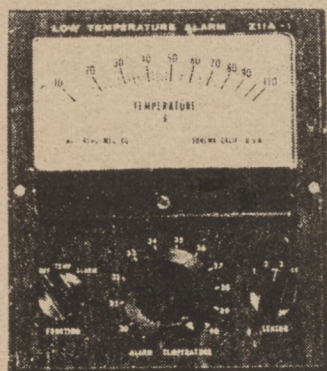
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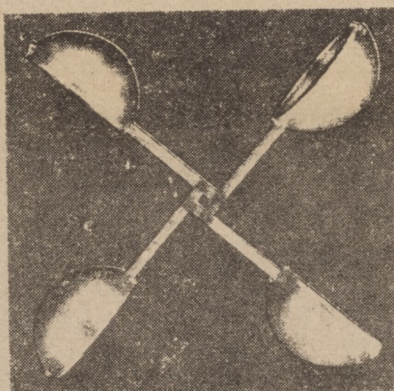
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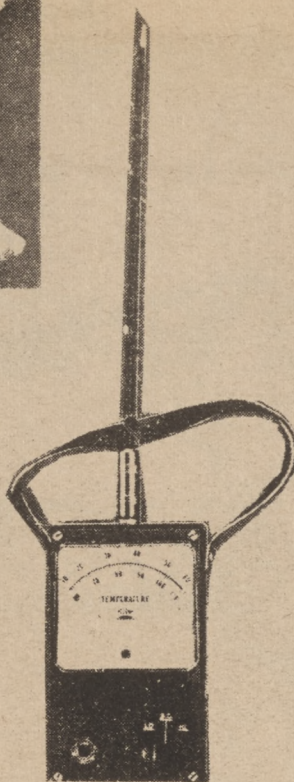
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Jessandra

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 60

turned into a screenplay and bought by actor Richard Dreyfuss.

While Kamen splits his time between his home in Crested Butte, Colorado and New York City, and tending to his demanding film career, Coturri and crew are busy grooming and maintaining the steep slopes of his new ranch in Sonoma Valley.

A natural availability of water seems out of place in this veritable hot, volcanic desert, but it abounds there, brimming with a number of underground springs.

The hot, southwesterly exposure and the jagged, fractured volcanic soils, ideal for drainage and teeming with nutrients (iron and hydrogen sulfide) provide a perfect environment for the cultivation of Cabernet Sauvignon grapes, Coturri says.

IN ADDITION to managing Kamen's vineyard and a number of others in Sonoma Valley, Coturri is a partner in his family's winery near Glen Ellen, Coturri & Sons. He glows with pride when he talks about the "intense", spine-cracking vineyard project on the Kamen ranch. Well aware of the potential for erosion that exists in hillside vineyards, he carefully weaved the steep, vineyard contours which span the mountain. Underground drains draw out water and catch basins were dug to collect surface water.

Cover crops are planted in the vine-

yards to help prevent erosion; where there is extreme steepness, Coturri lays down straw to stimulate the cover crop growth and hold the soil. The cover crops are mowed and disced in the spring.

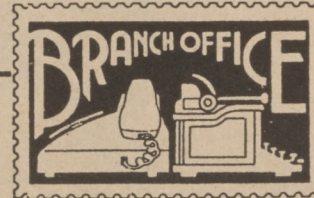
The computer system, being designed by engineers John Healey and John Cutler of Grateful Dead Productions, San Rafael, is a step, he explains, towards eliminating cost of maintenance. Mountain vineyard farming is notorious for taking a toll on equipment, not to mention the body.

Perhaps Kamen and Coturri could borrow one of the key themes from "The Karate Kid" and apply it to the challenges of rugged, mountain grape farming: "...the secret... lies in the mind and heart. Not in the hands."

A TOAST (as quoted by Herb Caen) from Ruth Wilson of Sacramento:

"Here's to the roses and lilies in bloom, you in my arms and I in your room, a door that is locked, a key that is lost, a bird and a bottle and a bed badly tossed, and a night that is 50 years long." Ladies and gentlemen, raise your glasses.

As the vintage season draws to a close, we pause to remember the over-zealous winemaker who flung himself into the fermented tank to add body to a thin, new wine.



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Smothers

Winery move to Kenwood on hold

Plans, at least for the time being, have been put off to establish a winery at the Remick Ridge Ranch property of comedian Tom Smothers in Kenwood.

Originally, plans had called for moving the Smothers-Vine Hill Winery, owned by his brother and show business sidekick, Dick Smothers, from Santa Cruz to the Warm Springs Road ranch in Kenwood where 25 acres of grapes are farmed.

In 1981 a use permit had been secured from the county to construct a 12,000 square foot winery there; an extension of the use permit was granted in September 1982.

But the current, uncertain state of the wine industry and the enormous costs involved in such a venture, have prompted a delay.

"It's too big a financial trip," commented Tom Smothers, "for a 4,000 case winery and the financial conditions that exist today. But there are

still a lot of things that could happen. All of a sudden, we could keep it totally family or get outside help, really go for it. We're looking at all options."

Whatever happens, Smothers, who with his brother recently completed a run of well-received shows in Las Vegas, seems more than content. Watching the last load of 1984 grapes being harvested at his ranch a few weeks ago, which he touts as being the best crop ever from Remick Ridge vineyards, the spirited comedian/rancher seemed quite at peace.

"Everybody's in a kind of mellow, holding place right now," he says. "There are so many things that are open. You can't choreograph a bullfight; you can't choreograph life. The music keeps changing."

The ranch has 10 acres of Sauvignon Blanc, 10 acres of Chardonnay and about five acres of Pinot Blanc, all tended to by local vineyardist Phil Coturri.—JPL



Photo by John Lynch

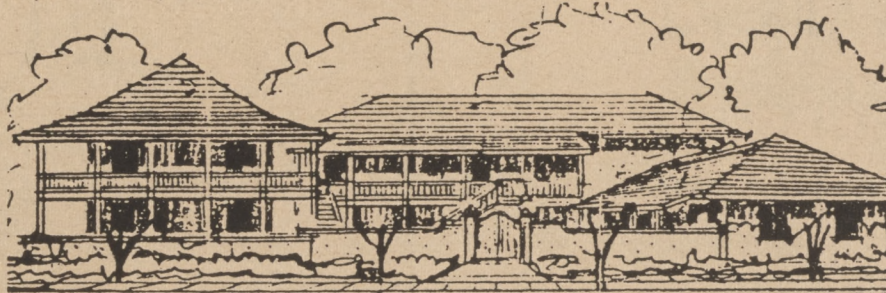
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General Vallejo winery returns

Plans in the works to restore vineyards, build winery replica

By JACKIE KRAMER
I-T Staff Writer

General Vallejo's presence may be felt by some of those who enjoy the free wine tastings at both the Sonoma Barracks and General Vallejo's home during Vintage Festival weekend (Saturday and Sunday, September 29-30). These historic sites are open between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. both days.

The Sonoma white wine and Sonoma red wine to be poured were grown on land owned or claimed by the historic Sonoma military man, and were crushed and bottled for this special occasion by Glen Ellen Winery. This winery belongs to the Benziger family, present owners of the land.

The wine tasting is free, and the only fee is the 50-cent admission charge to enter the Barracks, opposite the Plaza, or Vallejo's home on West Spain Street in Sonoma.

These wines will also be poured for those attending the by-reservation-only Vintage Festival Patrons' Wine Tasting from 6:30-9 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 28 in the courtyard of the Sonoma Barracks.

These bottles of white and red wine, with their historic label, will also be available for sale by the bottle (\$6) or by the case (\$70) at a booth in the Plaza during the Vintage Festival.

Those who attended the free wine tastings at the Barracks or Lachryma Montis will be issued cards entitling them to a free bottle of wine when making a case purchase.

ALONG WITH the wine tasting, visitors will also have an opportunity to hear about an exciting plan to create living history at the Barracks and Lachryma Montis.

After many years of work, the restoration of the original vineyards and orchards of General Mariano Vallejo will be accomplished, and a replica of his original winery will be constructed where grapes grown on this historic land will be crushed and made into wine.

Visitors to Lachryma Montis will be able to participate in this process, aiding in the harvest and crush of grapes just as early California pioneers did over 100 years ago. An extensive educational program is also planned, with special programs and tours for school children concerning the early

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CONTINUED

history of viticulture in Sonoma Valley.

This program would provide funds other than tax monies for maintenance and care of the Vallejo home and other state buildings. It would be a self-supporting program.

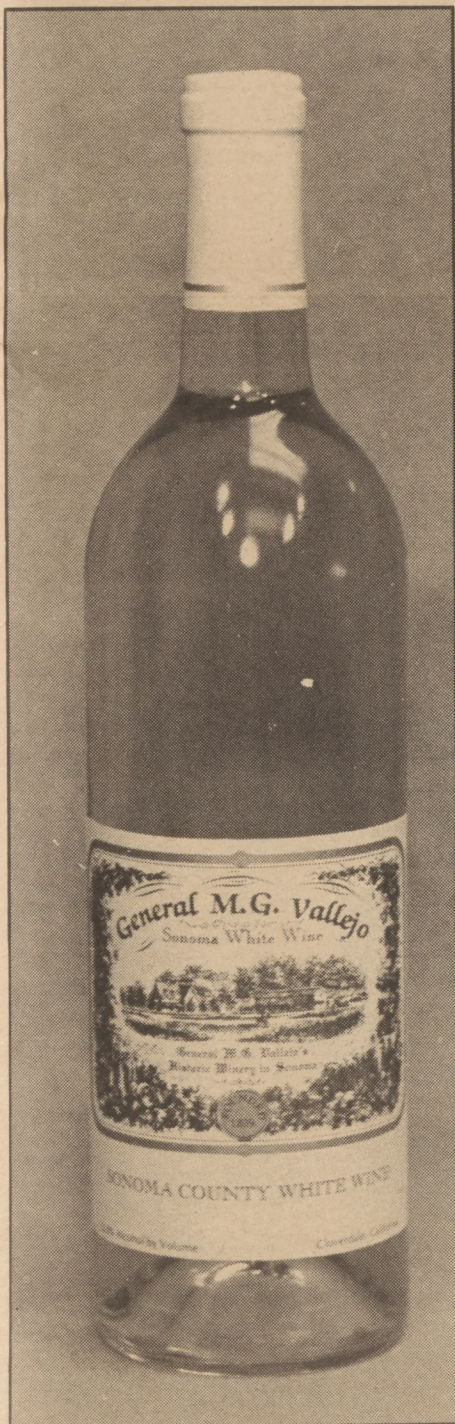
Committee members admit that the program is ambitious, but feel that it nevertheless has great visibility, with a mandate from the Parks and Recreation Commission to accomplish this, and great support from the Commission's regional office.

This exciting venture has all been accomplished through the efforts of a group of dedicated men and women over the past three decades.

THE GENERAL Vallejo Memorial Association was begun after World War II to see that the artifacts and furnishings of General Vallejo were brought home.

This group was active for a few years, but by the early 1950s it had become a strictly local organization. It has been presided over by Dan Rugles of Sonoma ever since.

TURN TO PAGE 67



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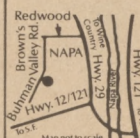
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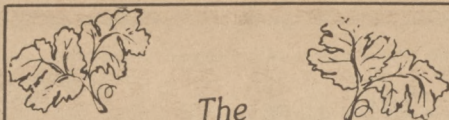
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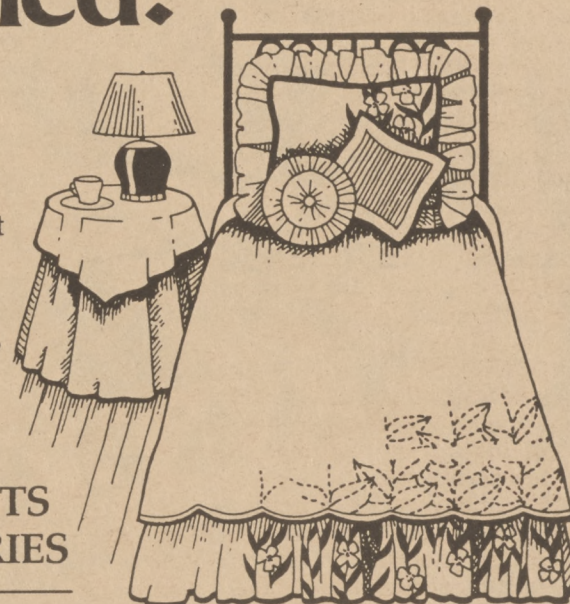
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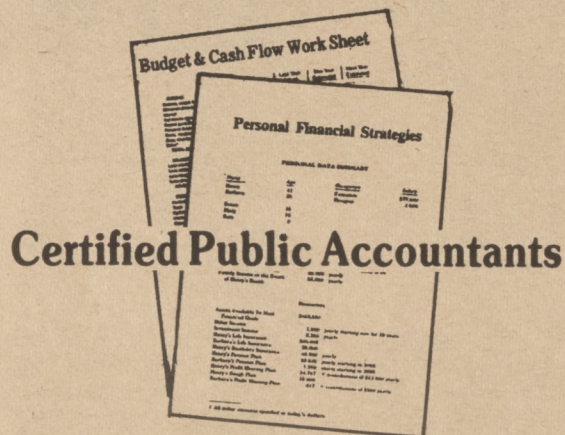
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Laurel Glen winery

Cabernet from the historic vineyards on Sonoma Mountain

Above the town Glen Ellen sits Patrick Campbell's Laurel Glen Vineyard, which has just released its own bottled product, 1981 Sonoma Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon, the first ever carrying that particular appellation.

While this is Campbell's first release, the grapes grown on his 27 acres have an illustrious past, and are well-known to local vintners.

The land that comprises Laurel Glen Vineyards was developed for grape growing in 1892 and has been farmed since then. In 1968, the original vineyards of Laurel Glen were replanted to Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc.

In the years 1975-1977, Chateau St. Jean used the grapes for their vineyard-designated Cabernet; in the years 1978-82 the grapes were the major component of Kenwood Vineyards' "Artist Series" Cabernet.

IN 1980, LAUREL GLEN became a bonded winery. From the hand-picking of the grapes, to the crush, the barrel aging and bottling, Patrick Campbell takes total control of the wines bearing the Laurel Glen label.

Campbell's tale of how he got into the business of grape growing and winemaking is a curious one; as he was attending graduate school at Harvard University, he couldn't decide

whether to become a classical musician or a professor. (He was studying both philosophy of religion and music at the time.)

Instead, he bucked both options and decided to become a farmer.

As the winery's p.r. man, its grape

TURN TO PAGE 69

Something new

•Laurel Glen winery p. 67

•Knights of the Vine Museum p.70



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Vallejo winery

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 65

Other committee members include Bob Cannard, who serves as vice-president, Col. Paul Walker, Helen Shainsky, Bill Clewe, Charles Beardsley and Jim Lynch. This group evolved into one of those rare organizations that has no dues and no regular meeting dates, convening only when there was work to be done.

Three years ago, however, at the group's annual meeting, those attending decided the time was right to replace the General Vallejo vineyards, to preserve and protect the earliest application of viticulture in the area.

After many meetings over the following months, the committee decided to accept the legal umbrella of the California State Parks and Recreation Commission. When these two groups combined, added local members included Nancy Lee Woodward, Tom Haeuser, Pat Watkins, Dave Viviani, Tom McCrae and Ray Bradbury. This combined group has since met three times a year for the past 30 months.

Members are anxious to add the aspect of living history to Lachryma Montis, with visitors able to actually view the process of cultivation of the land just as it was done so many years ago.

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Ann, Rebecca, Mary, Joyce.





Photo by Rhonda Parks

LAUREL GLEN VINTNER PATRICK CAMPBELL
Gathering his Cabernet Sauvignon grapes at harvest

Laurel Glen

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 67

grower, winemaker, field supervisor and owner, Campbell certainly has his hands full. His biggest concern however, is that which goes into the bottle, and how it's handled along the way.

"I TRY TO PICK at a lot lower sugar levels because mountain grapes are especially intense—you don't need a lot of alcohol," said Campbell.

"I'd rather not go over 13 percent (alcohol) and I shoot for high acid, which usually goes hand-in-hand with lower sugar."

Laurel Glen utilizes traditional

winemaking methods which promote the character of the vineyards. After hand picking the fruit is field crushed, and later, hot fermented in open top tanks. Light pressing, frequent rackings and two years of aging in Nevers oak finish out a wine with fruit concentration and long aging potential.

Laurel Glen's 1981 Sonoma Mountain Cabernet is sold in this area exclusively by Sonoma Wine and Spirits. While the winery is not open for tasting, the winemaker does encourage the public to write or call for information about his wines. The phone number is (707) 526-3914. The address is P.O. Box 548, Glen Ellen, Ca. 95442.

Belt buckle prize

The Valley of the Moon Vintage Festival is giving away a beautiful belt buckle made of German silver and adorned with a cluster of grapes fashioned out of jeweler's bronze. The buckle was donated by William and Nan Robson, the new owners of the Triple Tree. Raffle tickets are 50¢ each or three for \$1. The drawing will be held at the Vintage Festival Ball on Sept. 29 at the Sonoma Veterans' Memorial Bldg. You do not have to be present to win. Raffle tickets may be purchased at Bear Flag Realty (515 East First st.), Fineline Gallery (125 East Napa st.), and at Mission Sonoma Realtors (9 East Napa st.) During the festival, tickets will be available at the Vintage Festival Booth in the Plaza and at the Ball. For more information, contact Gail Lopez at 938-4238 or 996-5368.





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Knights of the Vine Museum

Rich in wine history and tradition at Buena Vista

By ROBERT M. LYNCH

Wine history and tradition dating back to the ancient days of France when knighthood was in flower are key elements of the brand new Knights of the Vine Wine Museum which was scheduled to open last week at historic Buena Vista Winery, 18000 Old Winery Road, Sonoma.

Buena Vista Winery is the official headquarters of the Universal Order of the Knights of the Vine, established in 1971 by Norman E. Gates, world traveler and bon vivant whose love of wine and its history was the basis for starting the novel organization—a brotherhood (and sisterhood) to glorify California wines.

Today, the diploma and decorations of the Knights of the Vine are found in the homes and businesses of prominent men and women in most of the states of the Union and in foreign countries such as France, Belgium, Switzerland and Germany.

The membership diploma and a member's badge of distinction—a gold tasting cup on a multi-colored neck ribbon—are the possessions of most of the great producers, vintners, writers and lovers of wine in California.

ASSEMBLAGES of the California Knights of the Vine are held four times a year, coinciding with the four seasons. It was at the Grand Assemblage of Harvest last Saturday, September 22, that the new wine museum was scheduled for unveiling at Buena Vista, with Gates, who still retains the title of Grand Commander, officiating.

Gates was highly laudatory of Marcus Moller-Racke, President of Buena Vista Winery for "having the vision" to put the project into action and helping "to rekindle the romance in wine we do not have in America..."

While artifacts for the Knights of the Vine Wine Museum here are still being accepted from donors, the initial display is highlighted by robes and paraphernalia of the local wine knighthood and other brotherhoods on mannequins.

Colorful robes, hats and decorations include those of the Conseil Des Echansons De France, Confrerie Des Vignerons De Saint Vincent, Compagnons du Beaujolais, Echansonnerie Des Papes, Commende Majeure De Roussillon, Viguerie Royal Du Jurancon, Ordre Des Chevaliers Bretvins, Confrerie Des Chevaliers Du Sacavin,



GRAND COMMANDER NORMAN GATES
Wearing one of many ceremonial wine robes

Photo by John Lynch

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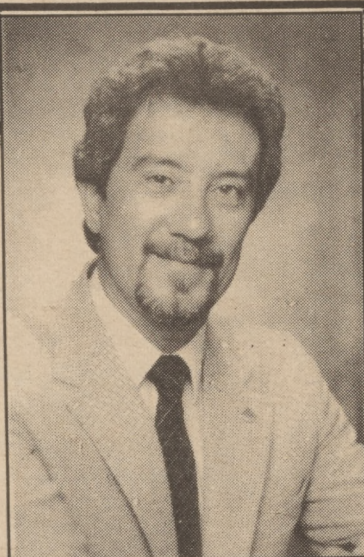
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The display cases contain 32 silver tastevins of various sizes and shapes, the golden marriage cup between wine and mankind, and tastevins made of glass, pottery and pewter. One pewter wine cup, unique and rare, is from the region of Sancerre, France and dates back hundreds of years.

An ancient wine press, still in working order, from Armagnac, France, valued at \$10,000, has been offered the museum. Transporting it here is the immediate problem.

If you have a valuable wine artifact you wish to donate to the museum, Gates said that your family name is inscribed as the donor. Items can be sent to the Knights of the Vine Wine Museum, P. O. Box 182, Sonoma, CA. 95476.

For information about Knights of the Vine membership, contact Norman Gates, Grand Commander, P.O. Box 13285, Sacramento, CA 95813.

THE PREAMBLE to the by-laws of the Universal Order of the Knights of the Vine of California reads:

Wine is a gift from God
Which has been used as a food
And a symbolic beverage for centuries;

Men have the privilege to enjoy and appreciate wine.

Wine is a gift of nature.
Growth of its consumption
Is a gift of man to man,
Therefore,

We bind together in the "Order"

To enjoy and appreciate its use

By telling of this gift in the world

And by teaching Restraint and Reason.



Patrons

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

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